THE

RESULT

OF

FALSE PRINCIPLES:

OR,

ERROR CONVICTED

BY ITS OWN

EVIDENCE.

EXTRACTED FROM THE ORIGINAL OF Womack

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CALVINIST CABINET UNLOCKED.

Ex veris poſſit nil niſi vera ſequi.

So they ſhall make their own tongue to fall upon themſelves.---Pſal. lxiv. 8.

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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

RESULT OF FALSE PRINCIPLES,

OR

The following Dialogues of DIOTREPHES.

Firſt, Calviniſm a Scandal to Pagans, and a Diſgrace to Chriſtianity.

Second, Calviniſm a Cloak for the Carnal and an Obſtacle to Converſion.

Third, Calviniſm a Sanctuary for the Secure, and a Superſedeas to Duty.

Fourth, Calviniſm a Plea for the Preſumptuous and an Acquittance from Repentance.

Fifth and Sixth, Calviniſm a Scourge to the Diſconſolate and an Arreſt of Comfort.

All which is fully proved in the DIALOGUES, *by Citations from Calviniſtic Authors, with Obſervations thereon,*

And from which it alſo appears, beyond all poſſible Evaſion, that this Doctrine of the Decrees, whether as dreſſed up by the Supra-lapſarians, or as eſpouſed by the Sub-lapſarians, is

1. Not profitable in the Exerciſe of the Miniſterial Function.
2. Not ſerviceable to the Intereſt of Souls, and
3. Not according to Godlineſs.

READER,

IN that diſtinction of GRACE into COMMON and SAVING, I ſpeak according to the ſenſe of ſome *Calviniſts*, and ſo 'tis *Argumentum ad hominem.* For though it be true, that there is a Divine light and power, which may be called *Common Grace*, vouchſafed even unto *Heathens;* yet that Grace of Chriſt's *purchaſing*, which is recommended and offered to us in the Goſpel is χάρις σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, *Tit.* ii. 11. That it is not *eventually* ſaving in moſt men is, becauſe they do *obicem ponere*, vid. *Luke* vii. 30. *Acts* xiii. 46. *Jude* 4. 2 *Cor.* vi. 1. *Heb.* xii. 15.

THE GENERAL

ARGUMENT.

THOSE Articles of Religion, which are *unprofitable* for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *inſtruction in righteouſneſs*, are *not practicable* in the exerciſe of the *miniſterial function*, *not ſervicable to the intereſt of ſouls*, *not according to godlineſs*.

The Articles of Religion concerning God's *Decrees*, with their *appendages*, whether as dreſſed up by the *Supra-lapſarians*, or as they are eſpouſed by the *Sub-lapſarians*, are unprofitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs.

Therefore,

24 OC 62

The Articles of Religion concerning God's *Decrees*, with their *appendages*, whether as dreſſed up by the *Supra-lapſarians*, or as they are (after a little finer *trimming*) eſpouſed by the *Sub-lapſarians*, are not *practicable* in the exerciſe of the *miniſterial function*, *not ſerviceable to the intereſt of ſouls*, *not according to godlineſs*.

The *Major* is evident, from the apoſtle's enumeration of the ſeveral uſes of Holy Scripture*.

The *Minor* is evidenced, beyond all poſſible evaſion, in the enſuing *Dialogues*.

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* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

DIALOGUE I.

CALVINISM A SCANDAL UNTO PAGANS, AND A DISCOURAGEMENT TO CHRISTIANITY.

DIOTREPHES AND PAGANUS.

PAGANUS. 'TIS now ſo long ſince your arrival in theſe parts, that I hope it will not be unſeaſonable to aſk how the climate agrees with you; how you like the ſoil, and the ſituation of the country; and I ſhall add this requeſt, that you would take the freedom, as if it were the place of your nativity, to acquaint me with your wants, that I may take order for your further accommodation.

DIO. Sir, I am much obliged to you for your civility; for which I return my hearty thanks, and ſhall be ready to ſerve you in the capacity of a ſtranger. I am much affected to this climate, and the more, becauſe it agrees ſo well with my conſtitution; and moſt of all, for the extreme civility I find amongſt the inhabitants. Sir, you have a fruitful ſoil and therein you ſee much of the riches of God's bounty; and you have a ſweet light, and warm influences; and theſe, as they ſerve to diſcover ſomewhat of his wiſdom and beauty to you, ſo they ſerve to bring his bleſſings to maturity and ripeneſs for you: but, Sir, as your own obſervation prompts you to the notice, how fading and unſatiſfactory all theſe things are? ſo let me tell you (for indeed 'tis my office, and the beſt inſtance of my gratitude and charity) that I do give you intelligence of a better country; for the furniſhing whereof, to the unſpeakable joy and glory of the inhabitants, the Almighty hath been pleaſed to diſburſe the richeſt treaſures of his bounty; and the fruits that grow there, do never fade, but adminiſter a durable ſatisfaction, and are perpetuated to an everlaſting enjoyment; for indeed in their paſſages thither, they that obtain an intereſt in it, have all their rags of infirmity ſtript off, and are cloathed with immortality.

Pag. Such a place, Sir, would excite a ſtrong deſire to make a voyage thither, if the journey were not too far. But perhaps, unleſs one could procure a happy ſettlement there, the thoughts of a return would allay the ſweetneſs of the pleaſure while one converſes.

Dio. Sir, ſuch as are bound for that place, make no return. If they be accounted worthy of admiſſion into that ſociety, as their hearts are immediately ſettled upon the ſtate of bliſs, wherein they are ſwallowed up; ſo do they receive poſſeſſion of their ſeveral manſions that are eſtabliſhed to all eternity.

Pag. I pray, in what part of the world is this kingdom ſituated?

Dio. Not in this world, Sir; it is above all heavens!

Pag. But where ſhould we find a ladder long enough to reach up thither to convey us to it?

Dio. Almighty God hath made a ladder for us himſelf, and ſent it down to convey us thither.

Pag. That is a great myſtery to my underſtanding. I pray what may that ladder be made of? We have no trees that are long or ſtrong enough for ſuch a ſervice.

Dio. This ladder is made of the Tree of Life, that grows in the Paradiſe of God. Indeed it is the Son of God himſelf; who is therefore ſtiled "the way, the truth, and the life. For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have life everlaſting."

Pag. What need was there of ſuch a diſpenſation? Could he not have made us happy otherwiſe?

Dio. God did make man upright at his firſt creation, and allowed him a communion with himſelf, and fair promiſe, upon proof of his conſtant obedience, of further happineſs; but, upon the temptation of the devil, he violated the command which his Maker had given him, and ſo betrayed himſelf, and all his offspring, to a ſtate of miſery, ſin, and ruin: But it pleaſed God, that his own Son, out of his love to man, ſhould interpoſe himſelf for our redemption. To this end he clothed himſelf with our nature, and became obedient, not only in a way of action to the whole law of God, but in a way of ſuffering too; for *he humbled himſelf to the death of the croſs*, that ſuffering in the fleſh, he might ſatisfy God's juſtice, and purchaſe a people to himſelf by the price of his own deareſt blood; and as many as will heartily ſubmit to him, and faithfully believe in him, ſhall be endued with his Spirit; and finally, inherit eternal life in his kingdom.

Pag. This I confeſs a wonderful condeſcenſion of the Divine compaſſion. But that God ſhould ſend his Son, and ſo much debaſe him, and all to exalt us! This is a myſtery ſo far above the pitch of my apprehenſion, that human reaſon cannot entertain it upon the account of a naked propoſition. That you may gain credit therefore to this doctrine, you had need produce good evidence for the proof of it.

Dio. "Without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs. God was manifeſted in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory*." While he converſed here on earth, he confirmed his doctrine by a world of miracles; and after he was put to death, he aroſe again from the dead the third day; and aſcending into heaven, he ſent down the

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* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Holy Ghoſt to inſpire his apoſtles; who being ſo inſtructed, foretold things to come, ſtruck hypocrites dead with the word of their mouth, and by the ſame power raiſed up others from the dead; ſuffered all the affronts and indignities a wicked world could inflict upon them, at the inſtigation of the malicious ſpirit; and for no advantage in this world, but only upon the aſſured hopes of their maſter's promiſes, that relate to another life, and the world to come. At laſt, having finiſhed the courſe of their miniſtry, with an invincible patience and alacrity, they ſealed their doctrine, and the teſtimony which they held concerning the Saviour of the world, with their heart-blood. Hereupon the great apoſtle, who himſelf was offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of this faith, cries out to us in theſe words, "How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation; which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will*."

Pag. I muſt acknowledge that theſe arguments which you alledge (ſuppoſing your tradition for the matter of fact unqueſtionable) are highly credible: But if I aſſent to your goſpel, and embrace the Chriſtian Religion; will the faith that is begotten in me upon theſe motives, be a divine faith, and ſufficient for my ſalvation?

Dio. I am loth to deliver any thing to you for ſound doctrine without good warrant; and therefore I ſhall ſay nothing to that part of your quære, whether a faith of this extraction may be called a divine faith or no: But our learned men do uſually call ſuch a faith an hiſtorical faith, and diſtinguiſh it from that faith which is ſaving. "To this purpoſe, I remember a great divine denying that it is God's purpoſe to give the reprobates faith:" he addeth, "Yet you will ſay, God puniſheth them for refuſing to believe: I grant he doth; for this refuſal (ſaith he) is the free act of their wills; and by mere power of nature, they might abſtain from this refuſal, and have believed as well as Simon Magus did, as well as prophane perſons do, as many an hypocrite does which is only *fides acquiſita*; and it is well known, they believe many a vile legend."

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* Heb. ii. 3, 4.

"But then he will ſay, ſuch a faith ſhall never ſave them: and I willingly confeſs (ſaith he) it ſhall not; for it never brings forth any love of the truth, any conformity thereto in their lives; yet are they never a whit the leſs inexcuſable that refuſe to believe."--- *Dr. Twiſs Conſiderat. of the doctrine of the Synod of Dort and Arles, reduced to the practice. Page* 47.

PAG. What benefit will this hiſtorical faith do me? If I cannot be ſaved by it, why ſhould I embrace it?

DIO. By this you know the object of faith in general; what you are to believe of God and Chriſt, and the Holy Ghoſt; what Chriſt hath done and will do for you; and what he commands you to do for him, and what you may expect from him; and all this you aſſent to by an hiſtorical faith.

PAG. Will this faith do me no hurt or diſadvantage, if I obtain not the other, which you call a ſaving faith?

DIO. Yes, it will make you guilty of a greater condemnation: "For it is better not to know the way of truth, than to turn from the holy commandment delivered to you; and the laſt ſtate of ſuch perſons is worſe than the firſt*."

PAG. Are not this ſaving, and that hiſtorical faith, always aſſociated and linked together? For if not, then it were better, if one cannot have the ſaving faith, to be without the hiſtorical too, rather than have this alone to our greater condemnation.

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* 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22.

Dio. They are not always in conjunction: yet we muſt not neglect this, when God affords us the Revelation, and the means of it; for this makes way for the other, which cannot be had without it.

Pag. Are all men then (to whom he is preached) bound to believe in Chriſt the Redeemer?

Dio. Yes; for when he ſent out his apoſtles to preach the goſpel, he gave them this commiſſion; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned*." And again; "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life: And he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him†."

Pag. Did the Son of God die for all, andedeem all, that they ſhould believe on him?

Dio. No; but "it pleaſed God to give unto Chriſt his Son from all eternity, a people to be his ſeed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, juſtified, ſanctified, and glorified; neither are any other redeemed by Chriſt."----*The declaration of the Congregational Churches at the Savoy.* chap. viii. n. 1. with chap. iii. n. 6.

Pag. How can God, in juſtice, oblige thoſe to believe in Chriſt as their Redeemer, for whom he died not, and therefore were not redeemed by him? Does he tie them to believe a lie?

Dio. All men that live under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, are tied to believe in Chriſt; but for ſeveral ends*. His people and ſeed are tied to believe, that by believing, they may be made partakers of the benefits of his death, and obtain ſalvation thro' him: The reſt are tied to believe, that by not believing, they may be the more inexcuſable, and liable to the greater condemnation.

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* Mark xvi. 15, 16.---Do any of our divines deny that God commands all in the church, all that hear the goſpel, to believe; whether elect or reprobates?---*Dr. Twiſs, ibid.*

† John iii. 35, 36.

Pag. This is a ſtrange kind of faith. But ſuppoſe theſe men that are not of that ſeed you ſpeak of, ſhould believe in Chriſt; what would the iſſue of their faith be? For though they ſhould in that caſe believe in Chriſt, they ſhould not be rewarded, becauſe they believe a lie; and yet they could not be juſtly condemned, becauſe in ſo believing, they ſhould obey God's command.

Dio. You ſuppoſe a thing impoſſible to come to paſs: for thoſe men you ſpeak of, cannot ſavingly believe, grace ſufficient and neceſſary to the production of ſuch a faith being denied them; and yet they ſhall be puniſhed for not believing.

Pag. I am not ſatisfied how it can conſiſt with God's juſtice to bind his creatures to impoſſible performances. And I ſhould think, his goodneſs would rather incline him to reward, than puniſh them for refuſing to believe a falſhood. But if you ſay, God may lay ſuch unreaſonable commands upon us, I ſhall not diſpute againſt it, though they ſeem, to my apprehenſion, to be a very great impeachment of his juſtice and ſincerity: But I pray, may not I take a little more time to deliberate about the buſineſs? I ſee 'tis a buſineſs of great importance, and I am loth to overſhoot myſelf in it: I hope it may be ſufficient, if I believe at the laſt moment of my life.

Dio. There is no more ready way to overſhoot yourſelf, as you ſpeak, than by your delays. Hereupon the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, "To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart;" and, "To day, while it is called to day; leſt your heart be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin *:" wherefore he ſaith, "I have heard thee in an accepted time, and in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccoured thee. Behold, now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of ſalvation †!"

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* Hence the miniſters of Embden, call this command, in reſpect of the elect, *Mandatum obedientiæ*; but in reſpect of the reprobate,—— *Mandatum probationis*.---De Gratiæ & Meriti Chriſti Univerſal. Queſt. Act. Syn. Dort, page 122. part ii.

PAG. Well then, if the preſent time be God's accepted time, and the day of ſalvation, I am content to take God's time; and the happineſs that comes along with it being ſo tranſcendant, as you have repreſented it, the ſooner the better. But all the queſtion now is, whether it be in my power to return and believe?

DIO. No, by no means; for you are yet in your natural ſtate, and "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned ‡:" Nay, "the carnal mind is enmity againſt God §."

PAG. How then comes this faith to be wrought in him?

DIO. It is not of himſelf, but it is the gift of God: he doth infuſe it irreſiſtably, and worketh it in us without us, and that "by an operation for mightineſs not inferior to that whereby he created the world, and raiſeth up the dead."---*Synod of Dort*, chap. iii. and iv. art. 12.

PAG. If faith be the gift of God, and wrought in us after ſuch an irreſiſtable manner; and likewiſe, if now be God's accepted time, and the day of ſalvation, as you have told me; why is not that faith even now wrought in me? The delay ſeems, by your diſcourſe, to be rather on God's part, whoſe work this is, than on mine, to whom it is impoſſible without

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* Heb. iii. † 2 Cor. vi. 2. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14. § Rom. viii. 7.

out him. I hope you would not have me perſuade myſelf that I am not of that ſeed of Chriſt you mentioned, in whom this work you ſay is peculiar.

Dio. No, Sir, I would not have you diſheartened; for a whole ſynod of divines have determined, that "thoſe who as yet do not effectually perceive in themſelves a lively faith, or a ſure confidence of heart in Chriſt, the peace of conſcience, an endeavour of filial obedience, a glorying in God through Chriſt; and nevertheleſs uſe the means by which God hath promiſed that he will work theſe things in us; ſuch as theſe ought not to be caſt down at the mention of reprobation, nor reckon themſelves amongſt the reprobate; but muſt diligently go forward in the uſe of thoſe means, and ardently deſire, and humbly and reverently expect, the *good hour* of more plentiful grace."--*Synod of Dort*. chap. i. art. 16.

Pag. Expect the good hour, did you ſay? Why this is a perfect contradiction to what you ſaid before, viz. that NOW is the accepted time, and the day of ſalvation. And if I be commanded to believe [*now*] certainly, to make that command juſt, and much more to make it not grievous, but light and eaſy, (as the goſpel commands are ſaid to be) there goes a power along with that command to make it poſſible [*now*], and ſo my duty; elſe what will become of your "Moving conſiderations to convince men of the folly of delay?" But I remember you ſaid, it was every man's duty, living under the diſpenſation of the goſpel, to believe. Now, if to make a man believe, be God's irreſiſtable work, and accompliſhed by his Almighty power, "not inferior in mightineſs, to that whereby he did create the world, and raiſeth up the dead;" how can this be a poor creature's duty? Could we think it equal in a good man, or conſiſtent with his goodneſs, to impoſe an inſupportable burden upon a child's ſhoulders, and to whip him becauſe he doth not carry it; when ſuch is his weakneſs, that he ſinks under it? Sure, we ſhould account this extreme ſeverity: and ſhall we attribute the like to God? God forbid.

Dio. God may give what laws he pleaſe; for his ſovereignty is abſolute, his dominion incontroulable: he is bound to none, and gives account of his actions to none.

Pag. I know, Sir, 'tis impoſſible God ſhould be obliged to his creature, whether upon the account of any law made by it, or of any benefit received from it; but yet the very nature of God, and that natural equity which is ſupereminent in him, God eſteems as a law to himſelf, and doth never tranſgreſs the dictates of it. And beſides, God doth freely enter into bond unto his creatures, as well by giving them a law, as by making them a promiſe: for if he preſcribes a law, he is (in his own natural equity) bound to beſtow grace and aſſiſtance neceſſary to the obſervance of it; and if he promiſeth a thing abſolutely, he ought abſolutely to perform it; if he promiſeth a thing conditionally, the condition being fulfilled, he is tied, upon the honour of his truth and juſtice, to make that promiſe good: as appears plainly by that which you call and value as his own word.---*Matth.* xxv. 24. *Heb.* vi. 1c. 1 *John* i. 9.

Dio. I beſeech you, Sir, have you been inſtructed in God's word?

Pag. I ſhall deal ingenuouſly with you. I have been long acquainted with your Bible, which you make the ground of your religion: and I obſerve, it ſpeaks very much of heaven, and glorious things of a life to come, and calls upon you very earneſtly to deſpiſe the world, and lay up your hearts and your hopes in heaven; but obſerving withal, what inſatiable avarice, ambition, and luxury, there is amongſt you that profeſs Chriſtianity; and how much more carefully (notwithſtanding your demure pretences) you lay out yourſelves for earth than heaven, and what factions you drive on to compaſs your ends; I have been drawn into a ſuſpicion, that few of you do cordially believe your own religion; or elſe that you think 'tis ſuch a religion as will ſave you by a verbal profeſſion, though your practice be at utter defiance to all the rules and precepts of it. Beſides, I have ſtumbled at ſome doctrines which I have found in other of your books; and it hath given me no ſmall ſcandal to read (what I now hear from your mouth) that the God you worſhip ſhould make ſuch a ſevere law (as you ſay he hath) for the regulating of his creature, and yet deny that creature a ſufficient ability to perform it. How this can conſiſt with juſtice, by which the true God is ſuppoſed to govern the world, I confeſs I underſtand not.

Dio. God help us;---In many things we offend all. But you muſt not impute the fault to our religion, which is holy, juſt, and good; but to the profeſſors of it, who refuſe to ſquare their practice according to the goſpel-inſtitution. But for the offence you take, that God enjoins a law, which is become impoſſible; you muſt know we hold the juſtice of God excuſable in this caſe; becauſe he gave all mankind a ſufficient power in their firſt parents, whom he created after his own image in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; and had they perſiſted in their obedience, their poſterity had been furniſhed with the ſame abilities, and had had the ſame image ſtamped upon them, in as full and fair a character as they had: but becauſe, upon the ſuggeſtion of the devil, they prevaricated the covenant of their Maker, therefore were they puniſhed with the loſs of that image, original juſtice, and ſupernatural abilities; and this ſin of theirs being imputed to their whole offspring, the very ſame penalty is alſo derived unto them, upon that account.

Pag. When ſin is committed, and a guilt contracted, admit, God be not tied to his own creature; yet he may be tied to his own natural equity, to proportion the penalty to the crime, and not to aggravate the affliction beyond the creature's demerit. And therefore, if they became delinquents in the perſon of *another*, that the penalty may hold correſpondence with the fault, they ſhould alſo receive their puniſhment in the perſon of *another*.

Dio. The puniſhment, as I have already hinted to you, was impoſed upon another perſon, even upon the Son of God: for God "laid upon him the iniquity of us all, and he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and by his ſtripes we are healed*."

Pag. But, Sir, I remember you ſaid, He died according to the counſel and purpoſe of his Father, only for a *certain* ſeed which he had given to him. The reſt he did not redeem, or die for: and yet he commands them to believe in him, and rely upon him, and denies them power to do it, too; which I cannot but think to be extreme ſeverity.

Dio. I told you before, that the juſtice of God is excuſable, becauſe he gave them power to believe in their firſt parent, in Adam; and to this prodigality they muſt impute this their impotency.

Pag. The tenor of your diſcourſe hath led me to look upon faith, or which is all one, believing, under this notion; viz. a laying hold upon Chriſt the Mediator, as the means to help us out of ſin and miſery; and if it be ſo, I am apt to conclude, that as Adam had no need, ſo neither had he power, (though he had ſo much as was ſuitable to his condition) in his ſtate of integrity, to lay hold on Chriſt. And if I apprehend your ſenſe aright, faith contains, or implies, a power to ariſe after our fall. If, therefore,

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* Iſaiah liii.

fore Adam before his fall had this power; then after he was fallen he might have elicited, or drawn it forth to his reſtitution; and ſo there ſhould have been no need of that omnipotent and irreſiſtable operation of God unto this work, which for mightineſs is not inferior to the creation of the world, or raiſing up of the dead, as is pretended. Beſides, the queſtion is not concerning the hiſtorical belief of a Mediator, in caſe God had made the revelation upon ſuppoſition of the fall (as he did not) but whether Adam had a power to believe in Chriſt ſavingly? This he could not do, becauſe ſaving faith implies a renouncing of one's own works, and a relying upon Chriſt's merits and mediation, for grace and pardon. This, in the ſtate of innocency, Adam could not do; becauſe God had given him a command, and tied him in a covenant to do otherwiſe: And I obſerve, that the Son of God hath ſealed a new covenant for mankind with his own blood; and he invites all men to ſubſcribe it. Now this is called, I perceive, a Covenant of Grace: but as it is eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes than the former; ſo, I find, that more dreadful threatenings are annexed to it alſo. I muſt profeſs my diſſatiſfaction herein. I think it very hard that Almighty God, after he hath deprived them of original righteouſneſs, for the ſin of their firſt parent, which they could no way be guilty of, but by his own poſitive conſtitution; I ſay, I think it very hard, that after this, he ſhould engage them in a new covenant, and tie mankind to new conditions, and not vouchſafe a competent ſtrength to perform them; eſpecially being tied to this performance under a ſeverer penalty: and how this can be called a Covenant of Grace, I profeſs I cannot ſufficiently underſtand.

DIO. We ſatisfy ourſelves in an humble ſubmiſſion to God's incontroulable ſovereignty, and a modeſt veneration of his moſt free beneplaciture; conſidering that the Redeemer himſelf doth check the objection of repiners with this ſhort reprehenſion, Matth. xx. 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I pleaſe with mine own?" And the great apoſtle of the Gentiles argues thus againſt ſuch diſputants, Rom. ix. 18. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." And *ver.* 21. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour? What if God willing to ſhew his wrath, &c." And this is that unfordable and unfathomable abyſs, which puts the wits of that great veſſel of Election to a ſtand, and makes him cry out in an extaſy of aſtoniſhment, Rom. xi. 33. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!"

PAG. If Almighty God intended his holy Scriptures (which are opened for all men to examine) for their inſtruction and benefit; ſure it is poſſible for a reaſonable creature uſing his utmoſt diligence, to gain ſome meaſure of underſtanding in them. And truly, if I be able to apprehend any thing, the place you laſt mentioned affords as ſtrong an argument againſt you (if you take the context with it) as one could imagine: for what, I pray, is the ground of that Ω βάθος[*]? Is it not the contrivance (as I may ſay) of his counſel, whereby he deſigned a general mercy (would they but embrace it) to all mankind? Without doubt you will be forced to acknowlege it with me, if you reflect upon his aſſertion that uſhers in that exclamation; for this it is, "God hath ſhut them (both Jews and Gentiles) all up together in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all:" and then it follows, "O the depth[†], &c."

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[*] Oh! the depth!

[†] Epiſcopius, Rom. xi. 32. ſays, "Which profound riches of wiſdom are found in him, in that God will ſave the leaſt part of mankind, and deſtroy the greateſt. This ſaying only properly belongs to him: So I will, ſo I command; my will ſhall ſtand for reaſon."

And though 'tis ſaid in the other text alledged, "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*;" yet, if you interpret that ſaying by a collation of it with other places, where he makes a further declaration of his meaning, you will find it comes far ſhort of a pregnant evidence to ſerve your purpoſe; for the Pſalmiſt tells us, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting upon them that fear him, and think upon his commandments to do them;" Pſal. ciii. 17, 18. Exod. xx. 6. And by this great apoſtle he hath ſufficiently revealed what his will is in this kind, even to have mercy to the ſalvation of them that believe†. And what authority or example can you produce to prove, that God did actually harden, or had a will to harden any, but ſuch as had formerly rebelled againſt the light, abuſed his patience, and deſpiſed his gracious diſpenſations‡? "Becauſe when they knew God, they did not glorify him as God, &c." "For this cauſe God gave them up;" Rom. i. 21. 26. and Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12§. "But my people would not hear my voice, and Iſrael would not obey me; ſo I gave them up to their own heart's luſts‖." We find that the Lord (though he had foretold what would be the iſſue of Moſes' miniſtry to him) is not ſaid to have hardened Pharaoh, till he had multiplied his rebellions, and dallied with five plagues: The laſt wherof, when Moſes undertakes the removal of it, he gives him a fair warning of his danger: Exod. viii. 29. "I will intreat the Lord; but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more." And becauſe he neglected to quit himſelf of the danger upon this hot alarm, therefore, with the ſixth plague, this judgment came upon him alſo: 'tis ſaid "the Lord (then) hardened the heart of Pharaoh;" Exod. ix. 12. and

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* Rom. ix. 18. 21. † 1 Cor. i. 22. ‡ Rom. i. 21. 26. § See alſo Luke vii. 30 ‖ Acts xiii. 26. 40, 41. 45, 46. Heb. ii. 3.

ver. 14. with the judgment following; the Lord threatens, "I will at this time ſend all my plagues upon thine heart." Therefore do not reſemble God to a mad, unwiſe potter, that lays out his coſt and ſkill in making up a veſſel, for no other purpoſe than to make oſtentation of his power, will and liberty, to break it. Perhaps the apoſtle by that compariſon takes upon him to demonſtrate, not what God will do, but what he can; for he ſaith, "What if God willing to ſhew his wrath, &c." Beſides, God is compared to the potter, and men to the maſs, or lump of clay; but what men are they that are entered into this compariſon? Not innocent men, or men made guilty by imputation only (as your doctrine ſuppoſes them) but men corrupt, through their own voluntary pollutions, as ſuch. This is evident from the apoſtle's diſcourſe in the three firſt chapters of that epiſtle. He declares then, that out of this maſs (or lump) it is lawful for God, according to his own beneplaciture, to ſelect ſome unto life, namely thoſe who would believe in Chriſt upon his being tendered to them*; and to harden the reſt, and reſerve them to wrath; that is to ſay, thoſe who would augment the number, and mount the heap of their other ſins, by the addition of a wilful unbelief. This, to my ſenſe, is moſt clearly that liberty† which the apoſtle aſſerts, and vindicates to Almighty God in that preſent juncture and current of his providence over Jews and Gentiles; though the Jews cryed it down with utter deteſtation, as a violation‡ of thoſe ſignal promiſes which he had anciently made unto their nation.

For your other allegation; Matth. xx. 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?" It can conclude nothing, but that God may diſtribute equal portions of reward to thoſe whoſe labours in his vineyard have been unequal; for when he that hath done moſt, receives the utmoſt they did contract for, why ſhould he repine at the Lord's bounty, which is no injury to him, though a benefit to others? But what is all this to the vindication of God's juſtice? when he invites men to a new covenant, wherein he promiſeth to proceed with them upon a gentler account, and ties them to new conditions; and yet denies abilities ſufficient to perform thoſe conditions; though he binds them to that performance under the commination and peril of a ſorer penalty. And I aſked you further, in what ſenſe this covenant with mankind could properly be called a Covenant of Grace? Which demand (and I conceive it a material one) you were pleaſed to take no notice of in your laſt reply.

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* Rom. ix. 30, 31, 32.---Chap. xi. 20.---See alſo John iii. *ult.*

† 1 Cor. i. 21.

‡ Rom. xi. 1.

Dio. You muſt know, Sir, that your natural reaſon, without a ſupernatural illumination, is no competent judge of the ſenſe of the Holy Scripture, which contains the mind of God; yet I ſhall not now reply to your interpretations, but addreſs myſelf to give you ſatisfaction to your laſt demand; which is, in what ſenſe the covenant, which God hath ſealed to us in the blood of Chriſt, is ſtyled a Covenant of Grace? To this end, you muſt underſtand, that there are a certain number of perſons predeſtinated unto life and glory, and theſe are called the elect: Theſe elect, "God Almighty, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpoſe, and the ſecret counſel and good pleaſure of his will, hath choſen in Chriſt unto everlaſting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foreſight of faith, or good works, or perſeverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or cauſes moving him thereunto, and all to the praiſe of his glorious grace." (And) "as God hath appointed theſe elect unto glory, ſo hath he, by the eternal and moſt free purpoſe of his will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto: wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Chriſt, are effectually called unto faith in Chriſt, by his ſpirit working in due ſeaſon; are juſtified, adopted, ſanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto ſalvation*." All theſe benefits are infallibly and irreſiſtably conveyed to thoſe elect, by virtue of the ſaid covenant: and upon this account, I hope, you will allow it to be very fitly entitled a Covenant of Grace.

Pag. I do readily allow of the title, in reſpect to thoſe elect you ſpeak of. But I pray ſatisfy me in this particular---What intereſt have the reſt of mankind in Chriſt, and this covenant? Do not the benefits you have now mentioned, belong to them?

Dio. For your ſatisfaction, you may aſſure yourſelf it is the determination, and public faith of the new congregational churches in England†, agreed upon, and conſented to by their elders and meſſengers, that "not any other are redeemed by Chriſt, or effectually called, juſtified, adopted, ſanctified and ſaved, but theſe elect only."

Pag. I pray, to what end did God create the reſt, and what acts hath he paſſed againſt them? and what providence doth he exerciſe towards them?

Dio. There is a text of Holy Scripture that ſaith thus: "Before the children were born, and when they had neither done good nor evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was ſaid, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger; as it is written, I have loved Jacob, and have hated Eſau‡." Out of which words a renowned divine doth conclude, that "God's ordaining men unto ſalvation, proceeds merely according to the good pleaſure of God, and not upon conſideration either of works or faith." And he adds, "As touching reprobation, that it is no more of evil works, than election is of good works: foraſmuch as before they were born, they were equally incapable of the one, as well as of the other; and the doing of evil is expreſly excluded, as well as the doing of good. Whence it followeth manifeſtly, that God's ordaining men unto damnation, proceeds as much of the mere pleaſure of God, and with as little conſideration of ſin; as God's ordaining men unto ſalvation, proceeds of the mere pleaſure of God, and without conſideration of any righteouſneſs in man."---Dr. Twiſs, *ubi ſupra*, page 38.

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* The declaration of the congregational churches at the Savoy, Chap. iii. n. 5, 6, 7. † Ibid. n. 6. ‡ Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13.

PAG. To deſign men to deſtruction or torments, though but temporal, without fault, for one's mere pleaſure, is ſuch a ſeverity as we uſually brand with the title of tyranny, when we find it in any man, though he were the greateſt emperor in the world; and truly I dare not entertain ſuch thoughts of God.

DIO. "We muſt diſtinguiſh in this decree, the act of God decreeing, and the things decreed by him (ſaith the ſame great Doctor*). The things decreed by reprobation, are,

I. "The denial of grace: By grace I mean faith and repentance, whereby that infidelity and hardneſs of heart, which is natural to all, is cured."

II. "The denial of glory, together with the inflicting of damnation."

"As touching the firſt of theſe, Look what is the cauſe of reprobation, as touching the act of God reprobating; that, and that alone is the cauſe of the denial of grace, to wit, the mere pleaſure of God."

"But as touching the denial of glory, and inflicting damnation, God doth not proceed according to the mere pleaſure of his will, but according to a law, which is this, "Whoſoever believeth not, ſhall be damned." And albeit God made that law according to the mere pleaſure of his will; yet no wiſe man will ſay, that God denies glory, and inflicts damnation on men according to the mere pleaſure of his will; the caſe being clear, that God denies the one, and inflicts the other merely for their ſins, who are thus dealt withal." And to this Doctor's opinion agrees, not only the confeſſion of the congregational churches, but that alſo of the aſſembly of divines at Weſtminſter, who (chap. iii. n. 7.) do declare concerning the reprobates, "whom they ſtile the reſt of mankind, that God was pleaſed, according to the unſearchable counſel of his own will, whereby he extendeth, or with-holdeth mercy as he pleaſeth, for the glory of his ſovereign power over his creatures, to paſs by, and to ordain them to diſhonour and wrath for their ſin, to the praiſe of his glorious juſtice."

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* *Ubi ſupra*, pag. 41.

Pag. Truly, Sir, as far as I am able to underſtand, by the proceſs of your diſcourſe, the whole matter of reprobation, as well touching the things decreed, as touching the act of God decreeing, is finally reſolved into God's mere pleaſure, to ſhew his ſovereign power: for you ſay he makes a law to bind men to repent and believe, under pain of damnation; and this law he makes for his mere pleaſure. You affirm alſo, that he decrees to deny ſufficient and neceſſary grace to enable men to repent and believe; and this of his mere pleaſure too: And from hence it doth undeniably follow, that he doth ordain ſin, and the introduction of it, as the means of damnation; and that of his mere pleaſure too.

Dio. "That he who intends an end, doth alſo intend the means, the very light of nature ſuggeſteth unto us," ſaith Dr. Twiſs*; "but I confeſs there is a little difference amongſt divines in this article. Piſcator† ſaith roundly, *Reprobi prius ad pœnam deſtinati ſunt, tanquam ad finem, deinde etiam ad peccata, tanquam ad media*; that is, the reprobates are firſt deſtinated unto puniſhment, as the end; afterwards to ſin, as the means :" but Dr. Twiſs ſaith, "We know[*] God hath given us means of grace; as for means of damnation we know none: ſins can neither be called man's means, nor God's means," ſaith he. "Not man's means, or intended[†] by him as means, foraſmuch as the intention of means ariſeth from the intention of the end: but no man or devil intends to bring upon himſelf damnation, as the end whereunto he intends to ſin. Not God's means, foraſmuch as means are intended but by him who is the author of them; which God (ſaith he) cannot be." This acute Doctor therefore doth determine the point thus: "The end that God aims at, is his own glory; for he made all things for himſelf. And if he means to manifeſt his glory on any, in the way of vindictive juſtice, it ſtands him upon both to create them, and to permit them to ſin, and finally to perſevere therein, and to damn them for their ſins. Here (ſaith he) we have the end and the means intended by God."

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* Ibid. page 73.

† *In Axiom. de prædeſt. &c.* cap. v.

PAG. God's end, you ſee, is the glory of his vindictive juſtice; his means is to create man, to permit him to ſin, and perſevere in it, &c. I pray, Sir, let me underſtand what you mean by God's permiſſive decree? I ſhould think it doth not import an abſolute decree in the will of God concerning the thing permitted; but only a negative act, whereby God is underſtood neither to will the being of that thing nor to nill it[‡]. And conſonantly, when God decrees to permit ſin, he decrees not to hinder it, but to leave it in man's power, that ſin may come to paſs, or not come to paſs, whether it doth eventually come to paſs or not.

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[*] Ibid. page 56.

[†] Though he does not intend this directly, yet indirectly and interpretively he may; and ſo a man may be ſaid to love death. Prov. viii. 36. and xv. 32. *Ibid. pag.* 73.

[‡] *Non Deo volente vel nolent, ſed non velente fiunt mala. Magiſter.* 1. *D.* 46.

Dio. You take the word *permiſſion* in a ſenſe too reſtrictive and limited. For man being created after God's image, in a ſtate of integrity, endued with free-will, and a ſufficient ability to abſtain from ſin; If God had permitted ſin in that ſenſe only (that you ſpeak of) for all ſuch a decree, it was poſſible for[*] man not to have ſinned; and then God had loſt his end, (the manifeſtation of his vindictive juſtice). It ſtands neither with the wiſdom nor the power of God, to make decrees, whoſe ſucceſs is doubtful and event uncertain[†]. As the decree for the illuſtration of his own glory, is abſolute and irreſiſtable, and therefore not to be defeated; ſo the means for the execution of that decree is certainly ordained, and to be accompliſhed inevitably; and therefore not ſuſpended upon ſo contingent a thing as man's free-will is, if left to its own determination.

Hereupon the Weſtminſter aſſemblers, and the congregational churches (treading in their ſteps, unleſs it be where they thought thoſe tread awry) do tell us[‡], that "God's providence is extended even to the firſt fall, and all other ſins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permiſſion, &c." So that this permiſſive decree is very pregnant and teeming, it brings forth in its ſeaſon, as is ſaid by the prophet of God's decree concerning a temporal judgment; Zeph. ii. 2.

Pag. Do you think that God allows, and approves of ſin, then? For this permiſſion (as you de-ſine it) imports ſomething to that purpoſe, as I conceive it.

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[*] Implicat contradictionem ut aliquis effectus ſequeretur infallibiliter ex cauſa defectibili & impedibili per concurſum aliarum cauſarum, hoc eſt, ex antecedente, quæ aliter atque aliter poteſt ſe habere. *Alvar. de Auxil. cap.* 7. *& Ameſ. ubi infra.*

[†] Deus enim ſucceſſiva decreta & incerti eventus condere non poteſt, quia ut potentiſſimus eſt, ita & a ſapientiſſimus, qui decretum de fine non facit, niſi decretum de mediis ei æque ſit certum. Sapientiæ enim non congruit, ut decretum de fine, quod per media exequendum eſt, ſine mediorum certa limitatione ſtatuatur. *Reſp. Ant. Wallæi ad cenſur. Corvini, pag.* 138.

[‡] Chap. v. n. ii.

Dio. No; we do not ſpeak of a moral permiſſion, which is a conceſſion; but of a phyſical permiſſion, which is non-impedition, a not-hindering; but ſuch as doth determine the infallible futurition of ſin: "For the decree of God, in permitting ſin, implies it will infallibly be; for what God hath decreed to permit to be, muſt be, and come to paſs," ſaith Mareſius, in his Hydra. Socin. vol. 1. p. 353. and a little after he ſaith, "By the effective decree, man determinately and certainly was to be entire, to be endued with free-will, and peccable; and by his permiſſive decree, that peccable man was to ſin of his own accord, and freely; but yet determinately, certainly, and infallibly." Hereupon Piſcator ſaith, "The decree of permitting ſin doth neceſſitate ſin; for otherwiſe it were to no purpoſe:" And again, "The permiſſive decree is alſo the efficient cauſe of its object; that is, of ſin." And upon this account, the divines of Wedderau, at the ſynod of Dort, do conclude, that ſins do come to paſs neceſſarily, in reſpect of the permiſſive decree: And ſome Engliſh divines do affirm, "that God's decree is not leſs efficacious in the permiſſion of evil, than in the production of good." Dr. Twiſs ſaith, "That ſin cometh not to paſs, but by the moſt efficacious decree, and ordinance of God. *Ibid.* p. 88.

Pag. This doth confound God's decree of permiſſion, with his decree of effection or operation.

Dio. They do but trifle*, and play the fool, that ſubſtitute a bare permiſſion inſtead of God's providence; as if God ſate only as a ſpectator, expecting the fortuitous and caſual events of thing, and ſo his judgment ſhould depend on man's free will.

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* Calv. Inſtit. lib. I. cap. xviii. ſect. 1.

Pag. Have you any good proof, that God's decree doth certainly determine the futurition of ſin ?

Dio. Our divines do prove it out of Peter's ſermon, Acts. ii. 22, 23. where he thus beſpeaks his auditors : " Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; Jeſus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders, and ſigns;---Him being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain." In the ſame breath (ſaith Dr. Twiſs) " both convicting them of crucifying Chriſt, and withal, acknowledging that he was delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God; the meaning whereof is fully ſet down, Acts iv. 28. to this effect, namely, that what contumelous outrages ſoever they committed upon the perſon of the Son of God; in all this, they did but that which God's hand and God's counſel had predetermined to be done."

Pag. God might out of his mercy ordain, that his Son ſhould be made a ſacrifice for the ſin of the world, and he might freely determine his own will to deliver him up for that purpoſe; and out of his foreknowledge, that the will of his malicious crucifiers would freely apply and determine itſelf to that wicked act of crucifying him; he might, as the Author of Nature, and to perform the office of the firſt cauſe, determine to uphold their power of acting, and not to hinder the uſe of their natural liberty by the withdrawing of his concourſe, but to afford the ſimultaneous influence thereof, that they might freely act what they had moſt wickedly determined.

Dio. We hold with Alvarez*, " that God by his eternal decree, and by his abſolute and effectual will, hath predetermined all our acts in particular, and that before the proviſion of them, and independently to any middle knowledge of our future free co-operation upon ſuppoſition; and Ameſius hath given the reaſon of it, becauſe the firmneſs of God's decree doth not properly depend upon the contingent and mutable will of man.

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* Apud Ameſ. Bel. Enervat. Tom. l. 2. c. ii. n. 4. p. 23.

Pag. This overthrows the liberty of the will, to my weak apprehenſion; and turns man, whoſe natural property it is to act freely, into the condition of a neceſſary agent.

Dio. No, you are miſtaken. For ſeeing not only every action of the creature, but alſo the manner of that action, depends upon the efficacy of the Divine will, it follows, that the providence of God doth not deſtroy the liberty of human actions, but eſtabliſh it, as the Belgic profeſſors have obſerved*: for God ſo rules his creatures, that he ſuffers them alſo to act and exerciſe their own motions, as Auſtin hath it: "Tho' God be the cauſe of the action in one kind, yet man is the cauſe of the ſame action in another kind. God preſerves his creatures in their nature and properties; he moves them alſo, and applies them to act (or work) agreeably to their nature. He affords them his concourſe; and ſo concurs with them, and ſo immediately influenceth the action of the creature with his action, that one and the ſame action is ſaid to proceed from the firſt and ſecond cauſe; inaſmuch as one production, or work, derives its exiſtence from them both; in which work, if there be any thing inordinate, it is from the action; not as it is the Creator's, but as it is the creature's." Thus the Belgic profeſſors, *Ibid. Theſ.* 13.

Pag. If God, as the Firſt Cauſe and Author of Nature, to conſerve that order and manner of working inſtituted in ſecond cauſes at their firſt creation, doth afford his general concourſe, that his creature may have power and liberty to do good or evil, and ſuffer the will of man to determine its ſelf freely to the evil act, and then (fore-ſeeing it ſo determined, upon ſuppoſition of his concourſe) doth yield his ſimultaneous influence to the production of that evil act; then it is poſſible to conceive how a man may avoid ſin, notwithſtanding that divine influx; for in this caſe, a man doth abuſe his own liberty, and the Divine concourſe offered to him *ad oppoſita*, and ſo doth freely determine himſelf unto the ſin, when he might do otherwiſe; and God ſhould co-operate with the created will, as the Author of Nature, according to the exigence thereof, rather than the will co-operate with God, as its firſt determiner.

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* Vid. Ameſ. Bel. Enerv. Tom. IV. l. iii. c. 3. n. ex. Alvar. Synopſis Theol. Diſp. 11. Theſ. 11.

Dio. That opinion doth caſt fetters upon the Divine liberty and providence: for if man's will doth freely determine itſelf before the Divine determination, then it would follow, that the power and providence of God can diſpoſe nothing, till the aſſent of the created will be expected and firſt had, with which it may concur as a partial cauſe to produce the effect: and ſo God ſhould not be the firſt, but the ſecond cauſe of this act; and the will ſhould not ſo much depend upon him, as he depend upon the firſt motion of the will.

Pag. If God preſerves to his rational ceature its natural propriety and manner of working, I ſuppoſe he doth ordinarily allow it the liberty of a ſelf determination: And I underſtand not how this ſhould be any derogation to God's power or providence; for the creature ſtill acts, not only under the general concourſe of his providence, but alſo under the ſpecial egreſſions of it; and God can, and doth, as it ſeemeth good to him, put in an immediate and extraordinary finger of power, to over-rule and order the actions of it. The creature therefore is not exempted from the conduct of his providence, by this means, as you pretend.

Dio. "We look upon all created beings as ſo many emanations from the firſt cauſe, upon which they depend in their being and working, as the rays depend upon the ſun: neither is the intellectual creature, in the actions of free-will, exempted from this order; for it is neceſſary, that every creature, and every action of it, and every mode, and perfection of every action of it, be reduced unto God, as unto the firſt moſt perfect, and therefore moſt effectual cauſe." We conclude therefore, that our wills are tied up ſo cloſe to the will of God, that, like leſſer wheels, they move only as that Great Mover doth guide them.

Pag. Methinks this doctrine ſhould be very apt to tempt men to believe, that God doth very much promote and aſſiſt them in their moſt prodigiouſly ſinful courſes.

Dio. The acts of God's omnipotency are carefully to be diſtinguiſhed from his legiſlative acts: by theſe laſt God always forbids ſin; but by thoſe former, he ſecretly incites men unto it, either by moving their wills, tongues, and members unto ſin, or elſe by not moving them to the contrary virtue; but withdrawing his grace and neceſſary aſſiſtance; whence it comes to paſs, that they cannot but ſin.

Pag. This makes God the author of the ſinful act, and conſequently the cauſe of all ſin in the world.

Dio. Though it ſounds ill to weak and tender ears, yet Mr. Calvin hath openly avouched it: "I have clearly ſhewed (ſaith he) that God is called the author of all thoſe ſins, which theſe cenſurers would have come to paſs only by his idle permiſſion: But that we may clear God of all imputation, we are taught to diſtinguiſh (when we ſpeak of ſin) betwixt the act and the malice; or betwixt the act which is ſinful (called by ſome *materiality*) and the ſinfulneſs thereof (which is called *the formality)* : God is the cauſe of the former, but only the permitter of the latter*."

Pag. This permiſſion then, by which you endeavour to free God from the imputation of being the author and cauſe of ſin, muſt not be an action by which God makes us to operate; but only *negatio impedimenti*, the denial of his impedition, or hindrance, in reſpect of that operation, which depends upon our free determination.

Dio. As I told you formerly concerning God's permiſſive decree, ſo now I muſt tell you concerning his actual permiſſion; if there were no more in it but the bare negation of an impediment, it were poſſible for man (eſpecially in his ſtate of integrity) to forbear the ſin to which he is thus permitted; and ſo God ſhould fail of his means for the accompliſhment of his end, the manifeſtation of his vindictive juſtice.

To give you, therefore, our full ſenſe and meaning, when we ſpeak of God's permiſſion of ſin, it imports, 1. That God doth ſubſtract†, or withdraw his grace and divine aſſiſtance, ſufficient and neceſſary to the avoiding of ſin; and that as well from the angels and our innocent firſt parents, as from their lapſed poſterity. 2. That he doth influence the ſinful act, after a two-fold manner. Firſt, in moving and predeterminating‡ the will unto that wicked work, by ſome previous reality received into it; and this is that which Ameſius§ approves of in Alvarez, when he ſaith, "God doth, by a previous motion, effectually apply the created will to work freely and infallibly, as he alſo applies other ſecond cauſes to work naturally." And he gives it us in his own words, thus: "God is converſant about the exiſtence of ſin, not by an idle and mere negative permiſſion, but by ſuch a permiſſion of the will, as doth fore-determine the very event itſelf*." And this is not all: for, ſecondly, God hath his influence, together with the will, into the ſame wicked work, by a concomitant, or, as they call it, a ſimultaneous concourſe. To this purpoſe Mr. Calvin ſaith, that man doth effect nothing, but by the ſecret direction and motion of Almighty God; nay that he does that which is not lawful, by the juſt impulſe of God.

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* Dr. Twiſs, *ubi ſupra.*

† Polan. Synt. Theol. lib. VI. cap. vi. page 326. E Maccov. Col. Diſp. 8. de ſtat. prim. Rom. (mihi) page 86.

‡ For that is now the prevailing opinion. Mr. Baxter on Saving Faith, p. 29.

§ Ubi ſupra, n. 5. vide etiam lib. III. cap. iii. n. 4. Ex Alvar.

Pag. If this be the nature of God's actual permiſſion, I cannot ſee how it frees him from the imputation of being the author and cauſe of ſin: for whatſoever ſinful act a man commits, 'tis abſolutely unavoidable, becauſe God applies and predetermines his will unto it, and that inſuperably, and produceth the act, and that immediately; otherwiſe the man, according to your doctrine, is not able to commit it.

Dio. I perceive you have little ſkill in the metaphyſics. Therein we are taught, that every thing that hath a being is good, and from God, and of his production: and therefore we muſt, as I ſaid, diſtinguiſh betwixt the act, and the ſinfulneſs of it. For example; in adultery, ſodomy, beſtiality, murder, treaſon, blaſphemy, the hating of God; though the obliquity and malice be foul and heinous, and therefore from man only; yet the act itſelf is very good, and therefore from God, and of his determining and production.

Pag. Is there any good in adultery, &c.? why then do good men generally pray againſt it, and declaim againſt it (before the commiſſion of it)? for if it be good, 'tis deſirable, and to be commended: and after commiſſion, why are the criminals enjoined penance, rather than obliged to give thanks, that God hath prevented them with ſuch ſweet mercies! And amongſt men, why are ſuch ſevere laws continued againſt adulterers, to cut off the ſpurious brood from their father's inheritance?

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* Ibid. n. 3.

Dio. This ſeverity is practiſed in deteſtation of ſo foul a ſin, and to deter men from it.

Pag. If the act of God be principal in the production (as I muſt needs conclude from your doctrine that it is) I hope it is very clean and innocent; elſe a holy God would never have made ſuch an ineluctable decree about it, much leſs would he predetermine man's will (without any preſcience of his own free and previous inclination) to it: And foraſmuch as ſuch an abſolute predetermination makes the act unavoidable, that inevitably makes the penalty unjuſt, that is inflicted to deter from it.

Dio. It cannot be unjuſt to inforce the obſervation of the righteous laws of God; and we know, though he doth predetermine the will of man, to the production of the act itſelf, yet he forbids the ſinfulneſs of it under a ſevere penalty.

Pag. By this doctrine you will make as well the commands of God, as the prayers of men, againſt the fouleſt ſins, to be unjuſt, irrational and abſurd; for, according to this doctrine, God ties men to impoſſibilities of his own making; he ties them to divide things that are inſeparable, either of their own nature, or by his divine conſtitution. In blaſphemy, and the hatred of God, (for example) the formal malice and the material act are inſeparable; let the real entity of theſe acts be determined by the will, acting with judgment and liberty, it is impoſſible even to the abſolute power of God, but that the formal malice, or ſinfulneſs ſhould follow it: If therefore God doth abſolutely and effectually fore-ordain, and intrinſically predetermine the will of man to the real entity of the act of blaſphemy, or the hatred of God; and yet tie him to avoid the ſin in theſe acts, he ties him to abſolute impoſſibilities; nay, he ties him to do that which is impoſſible to his own omnipotency; becauſe it implies a contradiction, that in theſe ſins the act ſhould be without the pravity, the entity without the malice; for theſe actions are evil, antecedently to any poſitive law; evil, intrinſically and eſſentially evil.

And this opinion makes our prayers againſt ſin, no leſs irrational and abſurd than God's commands; for what God does in time, that he decreed to do from all eternity. Suppoſe then that God hath decreed to produce the act of adultery, blaſphemy, hating of God in me; in praying againſt theſe, I muſt pray either that God would reſcind his own decree for their production in me, or that he would ſeparate the ſinfulneſs from the entity of them, which is impoſſible.

Dio. But I told you, though God doth produce the act, and predetermine the will intrinſically unto it, yet he doth but permit the malice or ſinfulneſs of it.

Pag. You may as well ſay, he doth but permit the burning of the flax, who doth actually throw it into the fire; and the adulterer, aſſuming the act of his uncleanneſs upon himſelf, might with as much ſhew of reaſon, proteſt that he was but the permitter of the obliquity of it. Some of your greateſt ſchoolmen do affirm, that the Divine permiſſion doth not tie a man up to one of the oppoſites, that is, to evil; but leaves his will at liberty to make choice of either; that is, of the evil act, or the good one oppoſed to it. This is impoſſible for him to do, under the arreſt of ſuch an abſolute decree, and intrinſical predetermination, and ſimultaneous concourſe, as your permiſſion importeth. Again,

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* Iſaiah liii.

what God permits, doubtleſs it is in his power to hinder. But admit the real entity of an act intrinſically evil, freely elicited, the power of God cannot hinder it, but a moral pravity will attend it; becauſe it implies a contradiction, that an act intrinſically evil, as of blaſphemy, and the hating of good, ſhould be freely elicited, and not be depraved with the adheſion of a moral vitioſity. He therefore that is thus the author of the material act, he cannot be the permitter; he muſt be the author alſo of the ſinfulneſs that is inſeparably annexed to it.

Dio. It ſeems you will not diſtinguiſh God's permiſſion from his operation and efficiency; nor allow him to be the author of any act, but he muſt be charged with thoſe imperfections alſo which it contracts through the deficiency of the ſecond cauſe.

Pag. You are very much miſtaken; for I think God's permiſſion ought by all means to be diſtinguiſhed from his efficiency; but you do moſt ſhamefully confound them: And I do acknowledge that ſome acts are of that nature, that the act itſelf may be from God, and the vitioſity from the creature; as in the act of prayer and alms-giving. God may ſtir up a man to pray, or to give an alms, and yet he may perform it with a mixture of vain-glory, Matth. vi. 2. But in acts that are intrinſically evil in themſelves, filthy and unclean, the vitioſity in thoſe cannot really be diſtinguiſhed from the act; nor the act, ſo long as the law that makes it ſin ſtands in force, be ſeparated from the vitioſity, unleſs it be by a mere mental abſtraction, as adultery, blaſphemy, hating of God: In theſe, he that is the author of the act, muſt needs be author alſo of the vitioſity. He that is the author of the inequality of the legs, or of the motion in ſuch as are lame, is the author likewiſe of the halting. He that is author of the antecedent, is the author of that which doth neceſſarily follow from that antecedent, whether it be poſitive or privative. He that is the author of the ſun, is the author alſo of the light. He that is the author of the interpoſition of the moon, betwixt the ſun and the earth, is alſo the author of the ſun's eclipſe, and the darkneſs that follows it; for that rule holds here, "He that is the cauſe of the cauſe, is the cauſe alſo of the effect, or that which is cauſed."

But give me leave to put one queſtion to you. When God commands, "Thou ſhalt not commit adultery," is this the ſenſe of that precept---Take heed, leſt while you produce the free act of adultery, any moral pravity or ſinfulneſs ſhould attend it? Or is this the meaning of it---Abſtain altogether from the free act of adultery, becauſe the malice or pravity that deforms it, is inſeparable? Is it the very act of adultery, murder, blaſphemy, hating of God, that is forbidden by the law of God; or only ſome defect or inordination ſuperadded to it, and diſtinct from it? If ſome defect or inordination only, you may do well to diſcover it, that the adulterer, being taught to diſtinguiſh, may take the pleaſure of the act, and yet keep himſelf innocent from the tranſgreſſion. But if the act itſelf be forbidden by the law, and as ſuch an act, then the author of the act is the author of what the law forbids, which is the ſin.

Where it is impoſſible to divide them in the commiſſion, as in adultery, blaſphemy, hating of God, why ſhould you diſtinguiſh them in the imputation? You ſay the firſt cauſe ſo concurs with the ſecond, that they produce but one and the ſame action; that the firſt is the principal, immediate, and predetermining cauſe. If then the ſinfulneſs of the action [produced betwixt them] be as inſeparable from it as heat from fire, and that action be avoidable to the firſt, but unavoidable to the ſecond; nay, if the firſt cauſe ordains that action, and as it is ſinful too [for otherwiſe it will not ſerve his turn] to glorify his vindictive juſtice, and impels the ſecond cauſe to commit it; I pray conſider impartially, to whoſe account this action ought rather, in equity, to be imputed?

Dio. But the ſecond cauſe is not compelled, but conſents freely to the ſinful action, and takes pleaſure in the commiſſion of it.

Pag. Indeed though you ſay the will of man is God's inſtrument, yet you add, that it is not a pure and mere inſtrument, but a free one. But wherein do you place this liberty? Not in a free determination to produce, or not produce, the entity of the act [wherein certainly true liberty conſiſteth] but in the conſecution [which is neceſſary too] of that moral pravity, about which the free power is converſant only by accident, and through the intermediation of the entity of the act. If God therefore doth pre-move and predetermine the will to the ſinful act, and produce it in him, the man cannot be made culpable by co-operating to this unavoidable production with freedom and pleaſure: becauſe this is the property and manner of working which God was pleaſed to concreate and preſerve in him. Beſides, where there is an extrinſical impulſion, he that is inſuperably acted by it, is equally blameleſs, whether that impulſion be through flattering inſinuations or opon violence, if they be equally irreſiſtable. So that this doctrine leaves a very fair plea to excuſe wickedneſs, and enables the malefactor, when he is upbraided with the enormity of his crimes, to return the exprobation upon theunavoidable predetermination and impulſe of his Maker; for it is not in his power to make his own ways either good or evil. He cannot perform one evil act, unleſs God doth firſt apply and predetermine his will unto it. And whereas there are ſo many ſeveral ſorts of ſinners in the world, this difference comes to paſs, not more by God's reſtraining of ſome to leſs, then by his predetermining of others unto more wickedneſs. Inſomuch as, to my apprehenſion, you make God to have as great a hand in the production of ſin as of virtue; and this is the opinion of Mr. Baxter, who ſaith, "If no free agent can act without the predetermination of God, as the firſt immediate phyſical cauſe, I cannot ſee why all our acts, good or bad, are not equally by infuſion."---Mr. Baxter on Saving Faith, page 29, 30.

Dio. We diſtinguiſh of things: Such as are naturally good, God effects by a ſingle influence[*]; what is ſpiritually good, by a double influence: one general unto the ſubſtance of the act; another ſpecial, as touching the manner of performing it, ſaith Dr. Twiſs: Or, as the ſame author hath it elſewhere[†]; "Every good work needs a twofold help; one of general influence, as it is a work; another of ſpecial grace, as good; but an evil work requires only the concourſe of general influence, as it is a work; but that it be evil, no more is required than the denial of ſpecial grace. In every good work, God not only influences the will to work, but alſo to work well; but in our evil works, he doth influence the will only to work, and not to work ill.

Pag. I. I deſire you to conſider, that the moral goodneſs of our works doth not follow the entity of them, as they proceed from God; but only as they proceed from the will of man, working freely according to the rule preſcribed him: Hence it is, that the ſame act, for ſubſtance, as it flows from a man diſtracted, wants that moral goodneſs that it hath, when it is produced by a ſober man, though God affords the like concourſe and influence unto the entity of them both: If therefore God be the cauſe of our good act, becauſe he makes us converſant with perfect knowledge about a lawful object; in like manner he muſt be accounted the cauſe of our evil act, becauſe, according to your doctrine, he doth predetermine us with the like advertency of reaſon, to be converſant about the unlawful object.

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[*] Dr. Twiſs, *ubi ſupra*, p. 91, 92.

[†] Cited by Mr. Hickman, in his *Juſtif. of the Fathers*. p. 97.

II. I pray reſolve me, touching the acts of adultery, blaſphemy, hating of God; are they therefore ſinful, "because they want ſome perfection which they ought to have? and will they ceaſe to be ſinful, when they have all the perfection which they ought to have, as Mr. Hickman* diſputes it? Is it only God's ſpecial influence into the manner of performing them, that is wanting in them? Is there any modification that can poſſibly hallow them? Will the help of ſpecial grace ſeparate the moral pravity from the real entity in theſe acts? Then I wonder not ſo much that Mr. Baxter makes adultery in David, &c. ſo exceedingly different from the like fact in a graceleſs man†. In good earneſt; if you know any qualifications ſufficient to refine and make ſuch acts innocent, it would be much for your advantage, I am perſuaded, to ſet up ſchool, and teach men how they may be adulterers, blaſphemers, haters of God, and yet not ſinners.

Some of your caſuiſts do‡ reſolve, that ſocial cauſes do communicate in the fault and guilt of thoſe ſins, to whoſe production they contribute their common aſſiſtance. Now ſhall he that aſſiſts, or commands, or perſuades me to commit adultery, or murder, be faulty; and he that predetermines my will to it, and that inſuperably; he that produceth the act, and that immediately, ſhall he be blameleſs? What is this but to condemn an acceſſary, and acquit the principal?

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* Ibid. p. 84.

† Pref. to his Grot. Relig. ſect. 18.

‡ Ameſius de Conſcient. lib. v. c. 10. q. 1.

Dio. But there is a great difference betwixt God's concourſe unto our good and evil works; to good works he concurs not only efficiently, predetermining the very faculty to the work; but alſo morally, in that he doth counſel, command, perſuade, and allure us unto the lawful object. In ſinful acts, he does only the firſt, and not the latter: ſo that of our ſinful actions he is the phyſical cauſe only, not the moral; but of our good, he is as well the moral as the phyſical.

Pag. You ſhould conſider, that moral motion doth not give God the honour of a true and proper cauſe, but only of a metaphorical; for the influence it hath into the agent, is not the very act itſelf; and conſequently the effect doth not follow that motion: If therefore God ſhould move us no otherwiſe, than after ſuch a manner, your partiſans do conclude that while we work, God ſhould not diſcriminate us, but we ſhould diſcriminate ourſelves from ſuch as work not; therefore, though God concurs unto the good act by a phyſical predetermination, and morally too; but unto the evil act by a phyſical predetermination only; yet there remains the ſame manner of working (in reſpect of good and evil) in that, which is chiefly conſiderable, and by itſelf alone, attributes the true and proper nature of a cauſe to God, and aſſigns him the firſt and perfect original of that determination, that this act ſhould rather be than not be.

But, 2. What is this moral motion, and from whence, and what doth it work upon, in its ſeduction of us to an evil work; be it in the underſtanding, or the will; in the imagination, or the ſenſitive appetite? If you allow it to be an act, you muſt confeſs (according to your principles) that it is from God, and of his production. Seeing therefore that the total ſum of God's concourſe unto the act of ſin amounts fully to thus much (in your own account) [that he predetermines man to produce the whole entity of it, and the whole reality alſo of every other act pre-required unto it; that beſides, he predetermines and applies the devil, and every other cauſe, in fact, concurring to propound the unlawful object, and to allure to it;] ſince he predetermines the will, and directs the intention, and provides the object, and applies the tempter, and addreſſeth all other circumſtances that concur to the individuation of the ſinful act; there ſeems to be no moral or phyſical cauſality wanting, that God ſhould therefore be ſaid to produce men's evil works, otherwiſe than he affects their good works.

Dio. But the efficiency of God, though he be the author of the act of ſin, doth not reach the formal malice of it.

Pag. No more do men, nor devils, in their moſt importunate contrivances, ſolicitations, and actings towards the ſins of others; notwithſtanding they communicate in the fault and guilt by impelling them to ſuch acts as are inſeparably attended with a moral pravity; neither doth any man produce the formal malice of his own wicked act, but inaſmuch as he produceth the entity of that act, to which that malice is annexed. If the reſolution of your caſuiſt lately mentioned, be authentic, he doth indirectly cooperate, and ſo communicate in the ſin of others, who is deficient in his diligence to prevent it; and he is ſufficiently diligent to prevent ſin, who doth predetermine the will to it.

Dio. Now I have freed God ſo fully from having any hand in ſin, by a metaphyſical diſtinction; you endeavour to make him communicate therein, by a moral interpretation. But that one may be accounted the author of ſin, he muſt be culpably deficient ſaith Dr. Twiſs*; and thus man may be guilty, ſaith he, either by doing what he ought to omit, or by omitting what he ought to do; but this cannot be incident to God. He could, I confeſs, ſaith he, keep any creature from ſin, if it pleaſed him; but if he will not, and doth not, he commits not any culpable defect; for he is not bound to preſerve any man from ſin: therefore all that can be inferred from hence is this[*], that man doth neceſſarily fall into ſin if God doth not uphold him; not that God ſins, becauſe he doth not give what he doth not owe him.

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* *Ubi Supra*, p. 72.

PAG. You grant then, that God is the cauſe of man's fall, though inculpable; but your Doctors do acknowledge, that to love God in ſuch a meaſure, as to contemn ourſelves, in compariſon of him and his ſervice, is above the power of nature. A man muſt be endued with heavenly grace, and the Spirit of God to enable him hereunto; and that accordingly, God created our firſt parents in a ſtate of grace, and endued them with the Spirit, that in this capacity ſuch a law of love might be juſtly impoſed upon them. Now I would fain be ſatisfied, with what equity God could withdraw, from his innocent creatures (and ſuch were our firſt parents before the fall) that ſupernatural and neceſſary aſſiſtance; and yet being thus (without any fault in them) ſtripped of their abilities, leave them under the obligation of that (now become an) impoſſible commandment, that they might inevitably fall, and periſh; yet this he did, as you concluded above out of your divines.

DIO. We ſatisfy ourſelves, in that God did this for a greater good; and that we may have no cauſe to complain, our divines conclude[†], that our ſtate of reparation, is, in ſeveral reſpects, better than our ſtate of integrity. "We are now under a better covenant, which is eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes[‡]."

PAG. This anſwer doth not ſatisfy my demand, concerning the juſtice of God's proceedings, in the caſe mentioned; for I remember, amongſt the rules of his own law, this is one; "Not to do evil, that good may come of it:" neither will it excuſe him, ſhould a man commit theft with a pure intention to expend all his gettings this way, to the glory of God, in alms and pious uſes.

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[*] R. B. Prid. *ubi ſupra*, p. 13.

[†] Maccov. *Col. Diſp. Col.* 2. *Diſp*, 9. *& ult.*

[‡] Hebrews viii. 6.

Dio. God makes laws not to bind himſelf, but his creature[*].

Pag. Grant this: yet if he doth not confer a ſtrength upon his creature proportionable to that burden of duty which he lays upon it, his impoſitions will be grievous and intolerable; and this is an oppreſſion which Chriſt himſelf thought fit to condemn in the Phariſees, where he ſaith, "They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's ſhoulders; but they themſelves will not touch them with one of their fingers[†]."

Dio. You muſt know, that God "is not obliged to his creature; he acts all things both in mercy, or otherwiſe; according to the dictates of his abſolute, ſovereign, and uncontroulable will[‡]."

Pag. Though God hath no ſuperior, to whoſe laws he ſhould be ſubject: yet, in a ſort, he is a law unto himſelf[§]; inaſmuch as he is tied by an intrinſical rectitude, neither to cauſe, nor to will any thing, but what is conſonant to the rules of his own wiſdom: that wiſdom dictates him to be the chief good, chiefly to be beloved, and that nothing is to be procured contrary to ſuch a goodneſs. From this rule and dictate God ſhould diſſent, if, of himſelf, he ſhould predetermine any man to the hatred and contempt of his goodneſs. True, his greatneſs is ſo tranſcendant, he can be accountable unto none; yet "if he be unrighteous, how then ſhall he judge the world? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right*?" This is ſpoken of deſtroying the righteous with the wicked; and it will hold alſo in withdrawing grace from the innocent, that they may fall into deſtruction; which certainly is punitive, and a ſad act of judgment, whereof an innocent creature is not the proper object.

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[*] Hereupon *Huld. Zuing.* ſaith, When God makes an angel or a man a tranſgreſſor, he himſelf doth not tranſgreſs, becauſe he doth not break a law. *In Ser.* de Prov. cap. v. & vi.

[†] Matth. xxiii. 4. Luke xi. 46.

[‡] Mr Bagſh. *Pract. Diſc.* p. 2.

[§] See *Lactant.* lib. IV. cap. xxiii.

But ſince we are returned to ſpeak of the New Covenant, I pray inform me, how that can be ſtiled a Covenant of Grace, in reſpect of the reprobates? and in what ſenſe their condition is better under this, than it was in a ſtate of innocency?

DIO. Under this covenant, ſaith Dr. Twiſs†, men are called upon to believe; and promiſed, that upon their faith, they ſhall obtain the grace of remiſſion of ſins and ſalvation; and theſe graces may be ſaid to be offered unto all, upon condition of faith,——though faith itſelf, in no congruity, can be ſaid to be offered; but as for ſuaſion and exhortation unto faith, this grace the reprobates, in the church of God, are partakers of, as well as God's elect: And I conceive, for theſe conſiderations, this covenant may not unfitly be called a Covenant of Grace, in reſpect of them.

PAG. Are thoſe graces of remiſſion and ſalvation offered to the reprobates (under this new covenant) in jeſt, or in earneſt? Doth God intend to ſave or delude them in this offer? Did you not ſay poſitively, juſt now, that 'tis impoſſible the reprobates ſhould ſavingly believe? A legacy under an impoſſible condition, the learned in the laws do account unworthy a wiſe teſtator; and therefore they conclude it ought in juſtice to be paid abſolutely, as if there were no condition at all added to it: But a ſtipulation, and any other contract under an unperformable condition, is accounted *null:* and are ſuch covenants beſeeming the majeſty, or the goodneſs, or the ſincerity of God? Does it not ſavour too much of hypocriſy, to offer pardon and eternal life, upon terms impoſſible? Suppoſe you and I were near a very fair palace, into which there is no way poſſible to enter, but over one narrow bridge; ſhould you promiſe me ten thouſand pounds upon condition I followed you into that palace; though you invite and call me never ſo importunately, and ſtake down never ſo many ſolemn vows, and proteſtations, to ſignify your reality and earneſtneſs; yet if pretending to lead me the way, you ſhould draw the bridge after you, and ſo make my following you impoſſible, there is none but a mad-man would think your invitation or your promiſe ſerious.

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* Rom iii. 6. Gen. xviii. 25.

† *Ubi ſupra*, p. 28, Mr. Baxter's Pref. to Grot. Rel. Sect. 9.

But I pray deal ingenuouſly with me. Do you really believe that the miniſtry of the covenant is intended for the benefit of theſe reprobates, or no?

DIO. Becauſe you are ſo deſirous of information, I will tell you the opinion of a perſon of great worth and learning, Jo. Piſcator: he ſaith, "That the miniſtry of the words and ſacraments is not only ineffectual, but miſchievous and deadly to the greater part of thoſe that are called, and that according to God's intention too;" and that he may not be thought to ſpeak without his book, he produceth ſundry texts of Holy Scripture for it.

PAG. Are the reprobates then invited unto grace, and called to engage themſelves in this covenant, when the miniſtry thereof is by God's own intention, ſo dangerous and deadly to them?

DIO. "God's invitation unto grace, is no other than by profeſſing, that by faith and repentance they ſhall be ſaved; without faith and repentance they ſhall be damned. And hereupon by his miniſters he commands them, entreats them, beſeecheth them, that they will believe and repent, that they may be reconciled unto God, and ſaved ; and this grace the reprobates in the church of God are partakers of, as well as God's elect[*]."

Pag. What difference do you obſerve betwixt the elect and reprobates, as to their reſpective concernments and engagements in this covenant?

Dio. The reprobates are called and obliged (as I may ſay) to ſubſcribe this covenant, and engage themſelves to perform the conditions of it, and are generally promiſed the benefit of pardon and ſalvation upon that performance, as well as the elect. But here is the difference : when the elect do actually engage themſelves in covenant with God, though they be thereby obliged to the conditions of that covenant, yet they have God reciprocally obliged by his promiſe to them; and his fidelity ſtands ſo far engaged to effect the conditions of this covenant, in them, and to ſecure them from the violation of it, that it is impoſſible, upon this account, they ſhould either finally or totally fall from it: But when the reprobates do by their external engaging act, oblige themſelves in covenant to God, *he* keeps himſelf diſengaged ſtill, and is not actually obliged by promiſe to them, for affording ſuch aſſiſtance (without which the conditions are impoſſible to them); and hence it comes to paſs, that theſe reprobates do prevaricate and break covenant, and fall totally and finally from God; which the elect cannot do[†].

Pag. But why doth Almighty God, being ſo merciful and gracious as he proclaims himſelf[‡], invite and woo them ſo earneſtly to engage themſelves in this covenant, ſeeing he will not vouchſafe them grace ſufficient and neceſſary to perform it?

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[*] Dr. Twiſs, *ubi ſupra*, p. 54.

[†] Mr. Baxter *Diſp. of R. to Sacram. Diſp.* 4. p. 422. M.

[‡] Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Dio. You muſt remember, God hath other attributes to glorify as well as his grace and mercy. He knocks at the hearts of reprobates by the outward miniſtry, becauſe they are mixed amongſt the elect, upon whom he works effectually by this diſpenſation; and ſometimes he moves them inwardly, ſaith Ameſius[*], That they may underſtand the benefit offered to them, the office due from them, and the heinouſneſs of their ſin. God doth this, as others[†] are pleaſed to expreſs it: 1. To convince them of their negligence: 2. To render them inexcuſable: 3. To improve their induration: And 4. to augment their torments. In ſhort, God, in theſe his proceedings, declares his own liberty and pleaſure, the abſoluteneſs of his dominion and ſovereignty, and, in fine, his juſtice too, becauſe hereby the reprobates are left inexcuſable; and violating that covenant wherein they have voluntarily tied themſelves, they are at laſt proceeded againſt as contemners of the Divine Grace, and the great ſalvation.

Pag. I confeſs, I have heard of a horrible decree, and of a hard ſaying: but of none ſo hard and horrible as theſe, in all my life. And if this be your Covenant of Grace, ſealed, as you ſay, with the blood of God's only Son, you muſt hold me excuſed, if thoſe laws by which I have been governed from my childhood in matters of mutual commerce and contract, keep me unſatisfied touching the equity of it.

Dio. Why, what is it you ſtumble at? All the learned confeſs, that it is in the power of God to annihilate the holieſt angel in heaven; and that in the execution hereof, he ſhould execute no other than a lawful power; and as he is Lord of life and death (though not as a judge) they conclude he hath power to inflict any pain upon the creature, be he never ſo innocent.

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[*] Bel. Ener. Tom. IV. l. 3. cap. ii. n. 7. mihi p. 55.

[†] See the Apol. for *Tilen.* p. 189 & 190.

Pag. To annihilate is one thing, to impoſe torments another. Where there is no deſert, God, no doubt, may take away what he hath given, without injuſtice. If in taking away his creature's life, he inflicts a pain that is finite, not exceeding thoſe pleaſures of life it hath enjoyed, who doubts of the equity of ſuch proceedings? But to inflict everlaſting torments in hell-fire, in proportion ſo much above all the good either conferred upon the creature, or made poſſible to it, is (to ſay no worſe) a ſeverity too extreme to be attributed to a good God. And if your principles be ſuch (as I think they are) that, according to them, the deſign of the whole affair muſt be finally reſolved into his mere pleaſure, to ſet forth his ſovereign power, the imputation will be ſo much the more abominable. To ſay (as ſome of you have done*) 'tis better to be in hell than not to be at all, is ſuch a paradox, that, beſides the common ſenſe of all the world, 'tis expreſly contradicted by Chriſt himſelf†.

‡ As for God's ſovereignty, I have no deſire to diſpute the limits of it; but as I take him for my Lord, ſo I take him as he hath declared himſelf, for "a Lord merciful and gracious§:" and as he ſhall be my judge at laſt, ſo I am confident he will proceed according to laws that are much more reaſonable than thoſe decrees and covenants which you have been unfolding to me.

But I pray inform me whether thoſe elect and reprobates you ſpeak of, ſhall be infallibly ſaved, and damned reſpectively, as you ſay is decreed?

Dio. Without doubt they ſhall; for the decree is paſt from all eternity, as well for the benefit of the one, as for the ruin of the other.

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* Dr. Twiſs, *ib.* a. 48.

† Matth. xxvi. 24.

‡ Vide Steph. Curcellæum De Jure Dei in Creaturas.

§ Exod. xxxiv. 6.

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Pag. Do you think there hath been any of thoſe elect in former ages, in theſe (which you call) Pagan countries? and if there were, what became of them?

Dio. Whether there were any of that number amongſt your anceſtors, is too hard a queſtion for me to anſwer; but if there were any ſuch, I am certain they were ſaved by ſome emergency of providence or other; for it is not poſſible that the elect, whom God hath choſen to eternal life, ſhould periſh.

Pag. I ſhall give you the trouble but of one queſtion more; which is to know your opinion, whether there be any ſuch elect here amongſt us now?

Dio. Sir, I love not to pry ſo far into God's ſecrets; this is a myſtery locked up in the cabinet of his own counſel. I had rather therefore you would betake yourſelf to ſome more profitable diſcourſe.

Pag. I have heard, 'tis the opinion of ſome of your greateſt divines, that this abſolute election is the very foundation of Chriſtianity; and if it be ſo, then a matter of that great moment is very fit to be enquired into, in order to my eſpouſing that religion. If therefore you think there be any ſuch amongſt us, I would know whether they ſhall periſh for the want of your adminiſtration? for if you ſay they ſhall, you contradict yourſelf, and then you are not fit to be believed: If you ſay, they ſhall not periſh for the want of it, then they will ſtand in no need of your miniſtry: But if you ſay there are no ſuch elect amongſt us, then I muſt enquire further, whether your preaching can procure us to become elect? If you ſay it may procure us to become ſuch, then it ſeems you can by your preaching procure new decrees to be made in heaven, and new immanent acts to be produced in Almighty God, and the number of the elect to be increaſed; all which aſſertions, as I have been informed, are contrary to the judgment of your own divines: But if your preaching cannot procure us to become elect (if we are not ſuch already) then to what end ſhould we admit of it? Seeing, therefore, you conclude us all to be abſolutely either elect or reprobate, and that neither the elect can periſh, nor the reprobate be ſaved; I ſhall ſatisfy myſelf that I am better without your miniſtry than with it; becauſe though it cannot beget a ſaving faith in me (that being, as you affirm, a gift of God's immediate and irreſiſtable infuſion), yet it may conduce to aggravate my ſin and condemnation. And in this reſolution I ſhall take my leave of you.

THE SYLLOGISM.

THOSE articles which, rightly underſtood, are diſcouragements to the embracing of Chriſtianity, are not ſerviceable to the intereſt of ſouls, not practicable in the exerciſe of the miniſterial function, and not according to godlineſs.

The articles which the Calviniſts maintain againſt the Remonſtrants, rightly underſtood, are diſcouragements to the embracing of Chtiſtianity.——— Therefore,

The articles which the Calviniſts maintain againſt the Remonſtrants, are not ſerviceable to the intereſt of ſouls, not practicable in the exerciſe of the miniſterial function, and not according to godlineſs.

The Major is evident of itſelf; the Minor is proved by the preceding Dialogue.

COLASTERION.

Rom. ii. 24.

The Name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you.

OTHER PROOFS OF THE MINOR.

" IT is falſe to ſuppoſe God does not work by the *ſinner:* for though he does not work by him to *his own happineſs*, (in which reſpect he works by no creature) yet to his *own glory, he does.* He diſplays the glory of his *juſtice*, in damning the impenitent; the glory of his *mercy*, in ſaving the penitent ſinner."---Piſcator againſt Schaffman, *Theſ.* 34.

" GOD wills not all who are *called* ſhould believe in Chriſt, and be ſaved."---Do. to his friend, c. u. p. 155.

" They alſo are bound by the command to believe, who by the decree of God are hindered from ſo doing."---Do. p. 188.

" Lo! he ſpeaks to them, but that they may be more hardened; he enlightens them, but that they may be made blinder; he offers them his truth, but to make them more ſtupid; he ſets forth a remedy, but not that they may be healed."------Calvin's Inſtitutes, Book III. ch. xxiv. ſect. 13.

24 OC 62

END OF THE FIRST DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE II.

DIOTREPHES AND CARNALITY.

CALVINISM A CLOAK FOR THE CARNAL, AND AN OBSTACLE TO CONVERSION.

Diotrephes. WELL met, neighbour Carnality. What earneſt buſineſs makes you poſt ſo faſt this way, and ſo early?

Car. Sir, I am going to my counſellor, for his advice about a purchaſe. We live in an age ſo full of hypocriſy and fraud, we had need take all the care we can to make things ſure, and prevent the machinations of deceivers.

Dio. I cannot blame you, that you are ſo cautious in your tranſactions for the world; for by this prudent courſe you may prevent much trouble and ſuits of law, which otherwiſe might emerge and ſpring forth out of your purchaſe, and be entailed upon your poſterity, at leaſt devolve upon them with the land itſelf. But, neighbour, there is another thing, I am afraid, you are too careleſs in; That *one thing needful*, that great concern, which calls for our ſupreme care and diligence: "Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure." Here is the inheritance that is worth the purchaſing indeed; an eſtate of freehold for ever. All the ſervice we do for it, is but the inſtance of our liberty, and the preface of our joy, and our preparation unto glory. To ſecure our intereſt in this (wherein we have ſubtil enemies, that are vigilant and induſtrious to undermine us) is worth our daily travel, our morning thoughts, and our night watches too. How welcome ſhould you have been to me, and how happy an hour ſhould I have eſteemed it, had your preſent addreſs been to me, with that queſtion of the jailor in your mouth; "What ſhall I do to be ſaved?"

Car. Sir, you pretend you are an ambaſſador for Chriſt, (I ſhall not queſtion your commiſſion) and you have often importuned me, amongſt the reſt of your charge, in the name of Chriſt, that I would be reconciled unto God! But Sir, is it poſſible you ſhould think me averſe to that motion? Alas, what advantage can I propound to myſelf in being at enmity with him who is my God, my Conſervator, and, withal, Omnipotent? I have more reaſon, conſidering how vile a wretch I am, to be jealous of the diſtance of his love to me. The fear hereof is ſo great a diſcouragement, that if not removed, it may fruſtrate all further attempts to gain aſſurance of it. I would be ſatisfied, whether God hath a real purpoſe and intent to ſave me: for if he hath from all eternity rejected me, then I am paſſed over to be carried on in another channel, that leads finally to hell; and then 'tis to no purpoſe to be ſolicitous for ſalvation, ſeeing whatever applications I make to him, it ſtands not with the immutability of his counſel to accept me unto mercy.

Dio. That "the carnal mind is at enmity againſt God*," is the affirmation of the apoſtle; and therefore there is no doubt to be made of it: and if you be not ſenſible of this enmity in yourſelf, againſt God, his ways and diſpenſations, the greater is your carnality and your miſery.

Car. 'Tis ſomewhat ſtrange there ſhould be enmity in the mind, and the man not conſcious of it. It muſt needs be very impotent and harmleſs, and as good as quite diſarmed, if there be no knowledge to draw it forth. I know the beſt men are not without their infirmities. They are conſtant attendants upon our condition of mortality. But there may be involuntary treſpaſs, and treſpaſs for want of ſufficient circumſpection,

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* Rom. viii. 7.

cumſpection, when there is no hoſtility profeſſed, or oppoſition directly made againſt the law or the authority of the Almighty. But I pray, Sir, what do you reſolve me concerning God's purpoſe to ſave me? If you be able to declare "All the counſel of God*," as St. Paul did, (and a guide of ſouls, ſure, ought to be ſo) then you can give me ſatisfaction in this particular.

Dio. If you do unfeignedly believe, you need not doubt of God's purpoſe to ſave you; for "whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, but have life everlaſting†."

Car. Is God's purpoſe to ſave men, grounded upon the intuition or preſcience of their faith?

Dio. No: If faith be wrought in you, you owe that production to the gracious efflux and effectual egreſſions of that his purpoſe and good pleaſure to ſave you.

Car. This doth ſomewhat confound me; becauſe, to my apprehenſion, it inverts the method of Holy Scripture; for the Scripture ſaith (as you alledged it even now), "He that believeth ſhall be ſaved;" (which affords a fair encouragement to believe); but your doctrine inverts the propoſition, and concludes, *He that ſhall be ſaved ſhall believe.*

Dio. The Scripture argues by way of aſcending from the effect to the cauſe: but we infer in a way of deſcending from the cauſe to the effect.

Car. However, Sir, you have lodged the cauſe at ſo remote a diſtance, that I perceive the effect is not in my power.

Dio. If by power you underſtand a faculty, or a ſtrength (and 'tis moſt commonly and fitly taken in this ſenſe) by which a man can do his duty, if he will; this phyſical power you have, and the worſt of ſinners have, while they are men on earth. *Serm. of Judgment. Anſw. to Exc.* 22. *mihi* p. 240.

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* Acts xx. 27.

† John iii. 16.

Car. Sir, I ſuſpect a fallacy in this part of your diſcourſe: but I paſs it over with this reply; that a man had as good want a power to his will, as a will to his power. That Chriſt hath ſo far redeemed mankind as to reſtore a power to them to do their duty, if they will; and yet that to will is ſtill impoſſible for them: is not this liberty a fine purchaſe? If the New Method with the Evidence *, affords not a more rational account of thoſe points in controverſy than this amounts to, I am afraid 'tis not ſo ſovereign as 'tis boaſted, for healing the diviſions of the Chriſtian world. Beſides, is not to will a part of a Chriſtian's duty? Without doubt, it is. If then a man hath power to do his duty, he hath a power to will; and it being his duty too to will ſpiritual good after a gracious manner, he hath a power to do that too, if your doctrine be true. But, good Sir, let me have your opinion freely in this point: Do you think a man hath free-will to ſpiritual good, without the aſſiſtance of ſupernatural grace?

Dio. "I pray let us not befool ourſelves with opinions. Let the caſe be your own. If you have an enemy ſo malicious, that he falls upon you, and beats you every time he meets you, and takes away the lives of your children, will you excuſe him, becauſe he ſaith, *I have not free-will, it is my nature; I cannot chooſe, unleſs God give me grace.* If you have a ſervant that robbeth you, will you take ſuch an anſwer from him? Might not every thief and murderer that is hanged at the aſſize, give ſuch an anſwer? *I have not free-will; I cannot change mine heart. What can I do without God's grace?* And ſhall they therefore be acquitted?"---*A Call to the Unconverted,* page 232.

Car. Sir, if your inſtances be pertinent, your anſwer to my queſtion is affirmative: for the law preſumes ſuch ſalſe ſervants and malicious enemies to have free-will in thoſe actions, and ſo a power to omit them; elſe it would not bind them over to puniſhment, but hold them excuſed, as we may collect from the indemnity allowed to arrant fools and mad-men committing the like facts. But to turn from the power of darkneſs to ſerve the living God, to believe in Chriſt, and perform other evangelical duties, requires an irreſiſtable operation on God's part, not inferior for mightineſs to that power whereby he created the world, or raiſeth up the dead; as the Synod at Dort hath determined.

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* See Mr. Baxter's Diſput. of Right to Sacram. in the preface, p. 15.

Dio. As your will itſelf is ſo corrputed, that nothing but effectual grace will move it, you have the more cauſe to ſeek for that grace.

Car. Sir, it ſeems to be a contradiction, that a man who is not actually willing, ſhould ſeek for grace to make him willing; for where there is a ſeeking, there is a deſiring; and where there is a deſiring, there is a willing: ſo that you preſcribe ſuch an uſe of means to procure effectual grace to make one willing, as ſuppoſeth him willing without that grace; which moſt, if not all our divines, account impoſſible. But I pray tell me, Sir, whether an inſuperable impotency to be converted and become God's ſervant, doth not render a man excuſable; and whether Chriſt will accept of me, is to be reſolved according to his eternal purpoſe, which is not certainly to be underſtood, but by his own ſpecial revelation, or his effectual work of grace, without which 'tis impoſſible to be his acceptable ſervant; and to obtain that work is a difficulty, which the willingeſt mind in the world, of itſelf, cannot overcome.

Dio. But God hath appointed certain means for the ungodly, which they are bound to uſe, in order to their converſion; and if they will not uſe them, they are without excuſe. *Directions to prevent Miſcar. in Converſ.* p. 265.

Car. Sir, when a man is made captive, and kept manacled and fettered in priſon, though you command the priſon doors to be all opened, and invite him to come forth, with all the rhetoric and earneſtneſs you can, and give him ten thouſand keys to unlock his fetters, yet if you keep the right key from him, no man will look upon you as any other than a deluder; nay, though you put the right key into his hands too, yet if his hands be ſo manacled, and his ſinews ſo benumbed and ſtupified, that he cannot uſe it; if you do no more for the reſtitution of his liberty, your offer of it will be but a perfect piece of mockery. I pray therefore do not conceal the right key from theſe poor priſoners, the bondmen of corruption: but give us a preſcription of ſuch means as are ſufficient and effectual for the work.

Dio. See that ye be conſtant readers and hearers of the word; and that it may not ſlip out of your hearts, meditate diligently upon it, and confer frequently about it, eſpecially with your teachers: be ſtrict in the obſervation of the Lord's-day; and conſtant in duty with your family; and importunate with God in your prayers, that he would pardon your former rebellions againſt the motions of his Spirit, and give you a ſenſe and feeling of your needs, and a thirſt after the ſupplies of his grace and righteouſneſs. Theſe are the means that God hath appointed to bring you into a ſtate of ſaving grace. *Treatiſe of Converſ.* p. 238, 239.

Car. I pray God we have the right key yet! Here are but two to ſpeak of in the whole bunch, prayer, and the word; and 'tis well if we do not find the firſt to be a key without wards; and the ſecond, one that will not fit the lock well: let us try: and to begin with prayer.

1. Dr. Twiſs* makes a mock of it, and upbraids Dr. Tilenus

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* Againſt Tilenus, *ubi ſupra*, p. 85.

Dr. Tilenus for ſeeming to attribute ſomething to the power of prayer, in order to our converſion. His words are theſe: "This author ſeems by his diſcourſing here of prayers, either to be poorly exercifed in antiquity, or richly exerciſed in the contemning of it; for he would have men to be effectually called by virtue of their prayers. The apoſtle ſaith, How can they call upon him, in whom they have not believed? But this author is able by his prayers to obtain faith." In his judgment (you ſee) prayers ſignify nothing to the obtaining of faith, or converſion.

2. I have read in the writings of Mr. Baxter*, that "the firſt ſpecial work of converſion, God hath not promiſed conditionary, or abſolutely, to any individual perſon that hath it not; he hath bound all to repent and believe, but hath not promiſed to make them do it; only he hath revealed that there are certain perſons ſo given to Chriſt, as that they ſhall be infallibly drawn to believe." Sir, that act of grace (you know) was paſt before I was born: and ſo 'tis too late for any addreſs of mine to procure my name to be put into the donation. If it be there already, I am then of the ſurer ſide; I ſhall be infallibly drawn to believe: But if God hath made no promiſe (abſolute or conditional) of that ſpecial work, what encouragement can I have to pray for it? Will not a prayer without a promiſe, prove to be a key without wards, as I ſaid? 'Tis only the prayer of faith that finds acceptation; and (not to ſpeak of an unregenerate man, into whoſe heart that faith is not yet infuſed) ſuch a prayer it cannot be, unleſs it be eſtabliſhed upon ſome promiſe†; for ('tis Mr. Baxter's doctrine, two or three pages

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* Direct. to prevent Miſcar. in Converſ. p. 265.

† For prayer is the formal act of faith and hope. And hope is a virtue, by which we are inclined to the expectation of thoſe things which God hath promiſed us. *Ameſ. Medal.* p. 277.

after the place mentioned, p. 269). "When men ſay they believe that which was never promiſed,---- this is preſuming, and not true believing:" And whatever prayer may be (according to your doctrine) I am ſure, preſumption is none of the means that God hath appointed to bring me into the ſtate of ſaving grace.

Dio. Though he hath made you no promiſe to give you ſaving grace, yet he hath revealed it to be his ſacred will, that you repent and believe, in order to your ſalvation; 1 Tim. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Car. I have read in the author mentioned*, that "God's will is ſufficient to cauſe the thing willed:" from whence I ſuppoſe I may rationally infer, that either God doth not will my converſion; or if he wills it, that his will hath cauſed it alſo; and then why would you ſo ſharply reprehend me for my non-converſion?

Dio. We muſt diſtinguiſh of God's will; it is either ſecret, and this is ſufficient to cauſe the thing willed, and never fails to accompliſh whatever it pleaſeth; or elſe 'tis revealed, and this hath no other efficacy than what conſiſts in the manner of ſignification (by commands, perſuaſions, exhortations, &c.) which may be, and oftentimes is rejected. When I ſay God wills you to repent and believe, I underſtand it, not of his ſecret, but of his revealed will, whereby he declares what ſhall be your duty to do, though by his ſecret will he hath determined the contrary. To this purpoſe Dr. Twiſs† ſaith, "By his commandment God ſignifies what is our duty to do; but by his purpoſe he decrees what ſhall be done, or not done. God commanded Abraham to ſacrifice his ſon Iſaac, and thereby made it his duty to offer Iſaac; but withal he determined that Iſaac ſhould not be ſacrificed."

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* Mr. Baxter's Preface to the Gro. Rel. ſect. 12.

† *Ubi ſupra*, p. 58.

Car. I ſhall not aſk you how it can conſiſt with God's ſincerity, to profeſs to will one thing, and ſecretly to will another: But I ſhall only obſerve, that ſince this revealed will of God is nothing but his external word, repudiable, and for the moſt part eventually rejected, it muſt needs be, as I ſaid, a key that will not fit the lock; I mean 'tis no fit and adequate means to bring us into the ſtate of grace, though you ſay God hath appointed it to that purpoſe. Inſomuch as Dr. Twiſs affirms*, that "the execution of God's goodneſs towards a man, is not haſtened by his hearkening to God's word; for though men do hear it daily, yet are they not forthwith brought to faith."

For this word is but a moral inſtrument, whoſe whole energy is exerted, and put forth only by precepts and inſtructions, exhortations and perſuaſions, promiſes and threatenings, (as was intimated even now); ſuch inducements as haply may conduce ſomewhat towards the inciting of a ſoul already alive and active, but can confer nothing towards the exciting of a ſoul that is dead of thoſe two great ſpiritual diſeaſes, wilfulneſs and blindneſs; and therefore it ſeems very irrational to undertake her reſurrection by ſuch feeble and incompetent applications: and Dr. Twiſs† doth readily acknowledge, "That God, unto the outward miniſtry of the word, doth not, for the moſt part, add the efficacy of his Spirit to work men unto faith and repentance," which is the actual cure of their blindneſs and wilfulneſs. So that this zeal and earneſtneſs you hold forth in a way of moral perſuaſion, with that ineffectual aſſiſtance of the Spirit, flies at no higher an aim, then to render men inexcuſable, if it can amount to that; for whatever cure it may work upon his blindneſs, it leaves his diſeaſe of unwillingneſs ſtill unmaſtered: and ſo, in fine, you leave me but where you found me, in my inſuperable ſtate of death ſtill, after all theſe applications; and though you call it but a moral impotency, yet 'tis ſuch, it ſhould ſeem, as is not to be cured by moral means, though ſome motions of the Holy Ghoſt concur with it. What therefore can you preſcribe me further, that I may, if it be reaſonable, ſubmit to it?

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* *Ubi ſupra*; p. 84. † *Ibid.* p. 116.

Dio. You muſt diligently go forward in the uſe of thoſe means, and ardently deſire, and humbly and reverently expect the good hour of more plentiful grace; ſo that famous Synod* doth adviſe you. And though you be dead in your treſpaſſes and ſins, yet you know, a condemned traitor, that is dead in law, may by humble ſupplication do ſomewhat to diſpoſe himſelf for pardon and life. *Mr. Baxter on ſaving faith*, p. 39.

Car. Sir, I doubt you contradict the doctrine of the Synod, if it doth not (in this point) contradict itſelf; for they infer, that an unregenerate man "is properly and totally dead in ſins, and deſtitute of all ſtrength tending to ſpiritual good; that he is not able to hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, or everlaſting life; or to offer the ſacrifice of an humble and contrite heart, ſuch as is acceptable to God." *Syn. Dodrac.* c. iii. iv.

Dio. "You muſt betake yourſelf daily to God in hearty prayer; beſeeching him to open your eyes, and ſhew you the greatneſs of your ſin and miſery, 'till you be unfeignedly humbled; and that he would ſhew you the need of his grace in Chriſt, 'till you can thirſt after him and his righteouſneſs; and that he would ſhew you the certainty and excellency of his glory, 'till your heart be ſet upon it above all." *Treat. of Converſ.* p. 239.

Car. We heard before, that ſuch prayers of the unregenerate have no promiſe to bottom on, and how then can they be made in faith? But beſides, the Aſſembly of Divines, and the congregational churches tell us*, "that works done by unregenerate men, although, for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good uſe both to themſelves and for others: yet, becauſe they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore ſinful, and cannot pleaſe God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God; and yet their neglect of them is more ſinful and diſpleaſing unto God." The laſt clauſe of which theſis ſeems to oppoſe the opinion of ſome other divines of the ſame combination, who ſay poſitively, that all works done before regeneration are more hurtful than profitable; but indeed they are coincident: for if they cannot make us meet to receive grace, nor pleaſe God, but are ſinful; then it will undeniably follow, that they are more hurtful than profitable to our ſalvation. So that upon the matter, after all the rules you preſcribe, and the advice you give to the unregenerate, you allow him but the choice of a leſſer evil to bring him into a ſtate of grace.

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* Synod of Dort, cap. i. art. 16.

Dio. You may miſtake thoſe aſſemblers, and the elders of the congregational churches; I find them declare in the chapter of free-will (c. ix. n. 3.) "That a natural man, being altogether averſe from that (ſpiritual) good (accompanying ſalvation) and dead in ſin, is not able by his own ſtrength to convert himſelf, or to prepare himſelf thereunto." Obſerve, they ſay, he cannot prepare himſelf by his own ſtrength; but if common grace be added to their own ſtrength, I ſuppoſe they will not deny, but by the acceſſion of ſuch auxiliaries, a man may diſpoſe himſelf for converſion: for that common grace is preparatory to ſpecial, is ſo commonly held by Proteſtants (eſpecially practical divines) and ſo plain in ſcripture and reaſon, that I ſhall not trouble you with many words about it.

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* Cap. xvi. n. 7. Of their Confeſ. and Declarat. reſpectively.

1. "He that uſeth God's appointed means as well as he can, is more diſpoſed for the bleſſing of thoſe means, than the wilful deſpiſer or neglecter of them."

2. "He that is nearer Chriſt, is more diſpoſed to come to him by faith, than he that is at a further diſtance."

3. "He that doth not ſo much reſiſt the Spirit, but with ſome ſeriouſneſs beggeth for the Spirit and for ſaving grace, is better diſpoſed for it, than ſuch as obſtinately reſiſt and ſcorn it."

Car. Sir, I have thoſe two aſſemblies againſt you: For mark their reaſon why they ſay, the works of an unregenerate man are ſinful, and cannot pleaſe God, nor make him meet to receive grace from God; their reaſon is, not becauſe thoſe works are wrought by his own ſtrength, and not by common grace, but "becauſe they proceed not from a heart purified by faith."

2. The Synod of Dort is clear againſt you; for they ſay, "All men are untoward to all good tending to ſalvation, forward to evil; and neither will nor can, without the Holy Ghoſt regenerating them, ſet ſtrait their own crooked nature; no, nor ſo much as diſpoſe themſelves to the mending of it;" chap. iii. and iv. art. 3. They do not ſay, men cannot diſpoſe themſelves by their own ſtrength, without common grace, to the amending of their crooked nature; but they cannot diſpoſe themſelves to it, without the Holy Ghoſt regenerating them.

Dio. But you ſhould conſider withal, what thoſe divines add in their 16th article, where they ſay, "As by the fall man ceaſed not to be man, endued with underſtanding and will; nor did ſin, ſpreading itſelf through all mankind, aboliſh nature with us, but corrupted and ſpiritually ſlew it: in like manner, this regenerating grace of God worketh not upon men as if they were ſtocks and ſtones."

Car. 'Tis true, they ſay, grace doth not work upon men as ſtocks and ſtones, becauſe it finds them endued with a will and underſtanding; but if you obſerve it, they tell us alſo that that will and underſtanding, do contribute as little to the work, as if God ſhould of ſtones raiſe up children unto Abraham; therefore they compare our regeneration to that powerful work of God "whereby he giveth being to this our natural life," (*ib. article* 17.) Now in conferring our natural life, God impoſeth no duty upon us towards the poſſeſſion of it; and 'tis abſurd, and a contradiction to ſay, we ſhould addreſs ourſelves by any way of preparation or diſpoſition, to the production of our own being. God indeed makes a providential uſe of our parents; but they ſay marriages are made in heaven; and the whole proceſs of the affair, in order to our natural birth, is extrinſical to us: and becauſe it is impoſſible we ſhould either reſiſt or further it, therefore it is no part of our duty to regard it. So we are taught alſo to believe concerning our regeneration, or new birth; for when God worketh true converſion in the elect, "He provideth that the goſpel may be outwardly preached to them, and powerfully enlighteneth their minds by the Holy Ghoſt, that they may underſtand aright, and judge of the things of the Spirit of God. And not only ſo, but by the efficacy of the ſame regenerating Spirit, he alſo pierceth into the moſt inward parts of man; whoſe heart being cloſe ſhut up, he openeth it: being hard, he ſofteneth it; being uncircumciſed, he circumciſeth it: and as for the will, he infuſeth new qualities into it, and maketh it, of a dead heart lively, of an evil heart good." *Ibid. art.* 11 *and art.* 14. God doth not only give a power of believing, and then expect the conſent or act of believing from the will of man; but he works the willingneſs and act itſelf of belief; and this he worketh *in nobis, ſine nobis*; in us, without us, (art. 12.) Irreſiſtibly by his omnipotent ſtrength; (reject. 8.) So that this operation, for the mightineſs thereof, is not inferior to the creation of the world, or raiſing up the dead. (Ib. art. 12.) And therefore all the actual reſiſtance a man can or doth make, cannot prevail to the defeating of his own regeneration: (Ibid. reject. 8.) This, Sir, is the expreſs doctrine of the Synod of Dort: in ſubmiſſion and reverence to whoſe determination, I muſt conclude, that this regenerating grace of the Holy Ghoſt comes ſo freely, that I ſhould but diſparage its freedom, in being at any coſt or charge to make proviſion for it: for the Holy Ghoſt brings his own entertainment; and having a power ſovereign and paramount, he will, whereſoever he comes, make his own welcome.

Dio. Well! whatever be the opinions of that Synod and the aſſembly at Weſtminſter, and the meſſengers of the congregational churches, in their meeting at the Savoy; I am very well ſatisfied that common grace is truly preparative and diſpoſitive to ſaving grace; not as one degree of the ſame ſpecies in morality diſpoſeth to another degree (for this we are agreed againſt) But, 1. As it is a leſs unpreparedneſs and undiſpoſedneſs than a worſe eſtate. 2. As it removeth many and great impediments. 3. As it is a uſe of the means appointed by God for obtaining his ſaving grace. 4. As in itſelf, and as far as it goes, it is a thing pleaſing to God, and loved by him; yea, as he loveth ſuch as have it, more than thoſe that are without it, with the love of complacency and acceptation; ſo as it is a ſtate much nearer Chriſt, than other men's of obſtinate wickedneſs are in; in theſe five reſpects I think it prepareth and diſpoſeth to ſaving grace. *Mr. Baxter on ſaving faith*, p. 45, 46.

Car. Sir, what are your own reaſons, though aſſiſted by the concurrent judgment of ſome Proteſtant divines --- I ſay what are they, that they ſhould turn the ſcale againſt the deciſion of a Synod*, of ſo many truly learned and worthy men, and an aſſembly, and the declaration of ſo many congregational churches? But to gratify your opinion and zeal, I ſhall in this ſubſcribe to your reaſons, and thoſe alledged by ſome of the divines of the forementioned Synod, rather than pay a blind obedience to the other's naked votes, and proofleſs propoſitions. I pray what advantage will you make of this conceſſion?

Dio. By this means I ſhall be able to demonſtrate that all the unconverted are inexcuſable; and as their impenitency and unbelief are wilful, ſo their damnation alſo is juſt.

Car. That will be ſome advantage to your miniſtry indeed, if you can make it good: but how can you make that evident to us?

Dio. "I remember Chriſt hath aſſured me, that of the many that are called, few are choſen; and that moſt men periſh, for all the mercy that is in God, and for all that Chriſt hath done and ſuffered, and for all the grace that is offered them in the goſpel." *Treat. of Converſ.* p. 2.

Car. I pray, Sir, were thoſe few choſen, becauſe they did receive this grace, and entertain Chriſt and the mercy of God, as it was offered to them when they were called? and was the refuſal of grace, and the non-reception of Chriſt and mercy, the reaſon of their non-election, who do finally periſh?

Dio. I do not affirm it.

Car. You cannot, unleſs you turn remonſtrant. According to your principles, election is the fountain

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* Mr. Baxter's pref. ſect. 11.

tain of all ſaving grace, and non-election the denial of it. How then will you (as you have undertaken to do) render the unconverted inexcuſable, and their impenitency wilful, and conſequently their damnation juſt; and all upon this account, becauſe common grace is preparative and diſpoſitive to ſpecial grace?

DIO. Why? their impenitency is wilful, and therefore inexcuſable; and their damnation juſt, becauſe they receive the grace of God in vain.

CAR. How is this poſſible, to ſpeak properly? for what grace is it you mean? If you mean ſaving grace (which is called effectual) then if this may be received in vain, it is reſiſtable; and this being peculiar to the elect, if they have none but reſiſtable grace to work upon them, they may receive it in vain, and may finally periſh: But I am taught otherwiſe (by one of your perſuaſion*, when you keep to your principles, who ſaith) "That God is pleaſed by effectual grace to draw the elect to his Son, and make the goſpel ſucceſsful to their converſion, inſuperably, teaching and charging them by his Spirit, and cauſing them to repent, and believe in Chriſt, and to perform the conditions of his promiſes; that love that brought the Lord on earth, that cloathed him with fleſh, that lifted him up upon the croſs, doth ſtream forth in his ſeaſon into the hearts of his elect, and toucheth them with a changing power, and winneth them to his Father and himſelf, and droppeth into them thoſe heavenly principles, which will grow up in them to everlaſting life." *Directions to prevent Miſcar. in Converſ.* p. 247. So that this ſaving grace is not only irreſiſtible, but there is alſo the good hour (as the interpreter of thoſe canons† calls it) or (as Mr. Baxter hath it) "his ſeaſon ſet, wherein it ſhall be inſuperably ſtreamed into the hearts of the elect;

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* Mr. Baxter.

† *Synod. Drodr.* c. i. art. 16. So ſaith Dr. Twiſs, *ubi ſupra*, p. 116.

and they can be converted neither ſooner nor later than this good hour or ſeaſon :" and therefore to ſay this grace is received in vain, is erroneous, and you ought to upbraid none with it.

Dio. But the common grace may be received in vain; and becauſe that is preparative and diſpoſitive to ſpecial ſaving grace; therefore the want of ſpecial grace, and the impenitency which continues through want thereof, are both wilful, and the damnation juſt, that doth attend upon thoſe privations.

Car. Sir, before you can charge any man that he hath received common grace in vain, you muſt define the nature, meaſure, and degrees of its energy and operation : 'tis unreaſonable to expect a thing ſhould act above the ſphere of it's activity. Will you expect a watch to go four and twenty hours, when the ſpring was made to go but twelve? or that a gun ſhould carry a thouſand yards, when the charge that is given it will carry but five hundred? If you think I ſhould arrive at a ſtate of holineſs and acceptation with God, by the help of common grace alone, you expect I ſhould fly an eagle's pitch with bat's wings.

Dio. I muſt tell you, "God will juſtly require more than he gives; that is, the improvement of his gifts, as Matth. xxv. 14. to the 30. ſheweth: He gave Adam but a power to perſevere, and not actual perſeverance; yet did he juſtly puniſh him for want of the act; even for not uſing by his own will the power which he had given him." *Ser. of Judgment. Anſ. to Exc.* 30. p. 249.

Car. And I confeſs this was moſt juſtly; for if God gives a man the power, it then becomes his own duty (under God's concourſe and influences) to act that power; and God doth not more than what is equal, having diſburſed his talents, and allowed time and opportunity to improve them, if he requires at the day of account, that they be returned with intereſt: But, Sir, if God commits to my truſt and ſtewardſhip but talents of *ſilver*, ſure his juſtice cannot expect that I ſhould turn them into *gold*; he knows his poor creature hath no philoſpher's ſtone of ſuch virtue; he expects but an improvement in the ſame *kind* of talents. Common grace you know, and teach, doth ſpecifically differ from regenerating or ſaving grace: and you may as reaſonably expect, that a man ſhould beget an angel, as that he ſhould turn common grace into regeneration. To this purpoſe we have the judgment of the Belgic profeſſors, inſerted amonſt the acts of the Synod of Dort, par. 3. pag. 154. theſ. 4. "Although to him that hath ſhall be given; an increaſe of the ſame gifts ſhall be adminiſtered to him that makes a right uſe of them; yet notwithſtanding, after the fall, God will not beſtow ſupernatural and ſaving grace upon thoſe that uſe the natural relicks of God's image aright; becauſe this grace is not conferred according to works, but according to the mere and free beneplaciture of God." And what theſe ſay of the relicks of God's image, others of them ſay of all common grace, that it cannot be improved to ſaving grace; becauſe the difference (ſay they) is no leſs ſpecifical.

Dio. I do not think that this ſame common grace is the very thing that is turned by any improvement of ours, or the elevation of Spirit into ſaving grace. Common gifts are not worked up to be ſpecial grace; one ſpecies is not turned into another.

Car. Sir, you dare not affirm that I am reſtored to that liberty of will that Adam had before the fall[*]; nor that the grace which is vouchſafed to me, is as ſufficient to enable me to riſe, as his was to enable him to ſtand.

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[*] 1. A *poſſibility* of perſevering, is given to the firſt man; but, *not actually to perſevere*, ſays St. Auguſtine, de Cor. & grat. c. xi. And again, the firſt man had ſufficient grace to have actually perſevered, but not actually ſo to do; and this not from any defect in the grace itſelf, but from the mere liberty of man, who would not uſe the grace given him.

2. That I have Chriſt offered, &c.

2. That I have Chriſt offered, I do moſt thankfully acknowledge; but whether thoſe daily and precious helps and means (not yet adminiſtered in the ſeaſon or good hour) were ſufficient to cure my will, and cauſe me to accept Chriſt, is doubtful: that they are not ſo to all in their unregenerate condition, will appear anon.

3. Whether I have received grace ſufficient to make me better, is a queſtion. They who maintain, that man can do no more good, nor omit more evil than he doth, muſt and will deny it.

Laſtly, Whether I have refuſed any preparatory grace (though that might fall into the ſame account with the former, yet I add) that is more than you are privy too; and therefore I pray be not ſo uncharitable in your cenſures. And now give me leave to aſk you a queſtion or two.

First, Whether it be poſſible to improve that preparatory grace to the height? If it be not poſſible, that impoſſibility will ſo far excuſe the non-improvement; but if it be poſſible to improve it to the full height, (which perhaps may be granted, becauſe a man can do what he can do; and ſure whatever God may do in juſtice, yet in goodneſs he will require nothing above our abilities)

Then my second queſtion is, upon ſuppoſition that I do not refuſe, but embrace, and to the utmoſt of my power improve, that preparatory grace that is offered me; whether, in that caſe, you have any commiſſion to warrant me, that God will confer his ſaving grace upon me?

Dio. I am ſatisfied, "That God hath not entered into covenant or promiſe with any unregenerate man to give him ſaving grace, upon any condition to be performed without it." *Mr. Baxter on ſaving faith.* p. 46.

Car. Then, as we ſaid before, he hath no promiſe to make his prayer for ſaving grace, to become a prayer a prayer of faith in this particular; but though there be no promiſe, yet haply theſe preparatory diſpoſitions (as hearing the word, &c.) have a certain and infallible connection with ſalvation; and that may be ſome encouragement,

Dio. No, we do not ſay they have; for that affirmation denieth the power of the potter over a non-believer thus qualified, and ſo ſins againſt the freedom of the ſovereignty of God and Chriſt, in making God a debtor of mercy before his time. *Norton. Orthodox. Evangeliſt.* p. 186. f. with 190. M.

Car. While you are ſo careful to reſerve to the Almighty a power to damn even poor humbled and prepared ſinners; you ſeem to be more tender of his ſovereignty, than of his goodneſs, mercy or juſtice: But, to let this paſs; I pray, upon theſe grounds, what encouragements can you find to incite the unregenerate to the improvement of preparatory grace?

Dio. God "hath commanded him to uſe certain means to obtain ſaving grace, and to avoid the reſiſtance and hinderances; and a very command to uſe ſuch means as means, is a ſtrongly encouraging intimation, that God will not deny men the end and bleſſing, that uſe the means as well as they can; for it is certain that he appointeth no means in vain." *Mr. Baxter on ſaving faith*, p. 46.

Car. But, Sir, now you have brought me thus far, the great and ſtumbling objection is behind ſtill; for Mr. Norton tells us, that theſe preparatory works are really to none but the elect only*: as for the reprobates, all the water of life runs beſide their mill; all gifts whatſoever are unprofitable to them; ſo ſaith Martinius, one of the moſt moderate of the Synod of Dort. *De Morte Chriſti pro ſoli Electis. Theſ.* 4 & 5. *Act. Syn. Dord. par.* 2. p. 107. By this it is evident, that your daily and precious helps and means to cure the wills of the unregenerate, and cauſe them to accept of Chriſt, are altogether inſufficient, whatever you pretend to the contrary. And this as great a clerk[*] as yourſelf was very ſenſible of, when he peremptorily denies that the reprobates may be ſanctified; and conſonantly the congregational churches do deal ingenuouſly[†], "That they who are not elected, although they may be called by the miniſtry of the word, and may have ſome common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither do, nor can come unto Chriſt, and therefore cannot be ſaved."

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* Orthod. Evang. p. 164.

Dio. "However they are damned for contemning God's word, and not hearkening to his gracious admonitions; it is true, they could do no otherwiſe: but what impotency is this? Is it any where elſe than in their wills? 'Tis not a natural, but a moral impotency. Were they willing to hearken (and come to Chriſt) but could not, then indeed their impotency were excuſable; but they pleaſe themſelves in their own, and in their obſtinate courſes; and if they would do otherwiſe, I make no queſtion, but that they ſhould have no more cauſe to complain of their impotency to do that good which they would do, than the ſervants of God have, yea, and holy Paul himſelf had.——Do they deplore this (their) impotency? Doth the conſideration hereof humble them? Nay, rather they delight in it, as the Prophet noteth, Jerem. vi. 10. "Their ears are uncircumciſed ears, and they cannot hearken; behold the word of God is as a reproach unto them[‡] Thus far Dr. Twiſs.

Car. That men may accuſtom themſelves to a courſe of carnality, 'till they arrive at ſuch a ſtate of impiety and obduration, I make no queſtion; but all are not of that temper: "There are ſome *, who are as far abaſed in the feeling of their ſin and miſery, and humbled by attrition, and cry out of their ſin and folly, and day and night do beg for grace and mercy; as common grace will carry them to do. They like the word and ways of God, and think his ſervants the beſt and happieſt men, and have many a wiſh that they were ſuch themſelves; and that avoid as much groſs and wilſul ſinning, and continue as much in hearing, reading the word, enquiring, and conſideration, as common grace may bring them to do; and have as much belief of the goſpel, and as much deſire after Chriſt and holineſs, and heaven, and as much love to God and the Redeemer, and the ſaints, as common grace can lead them to: And withal, that have a knowledge that yet they are ſhort of true Chriſtianity, or at leaſt are much afraid of it; and therefore are under a prudent impatiency, 'till ſaving grace comes in, and the Spirit have ſealed them up to the day of redemption, and are crying out, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?*" Now I demand, whether you have any promiſe that aſſures their intereſt in ſaving grace, to ſuch as are thus diſpoſed for it?

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[*] Mr. Baxter, in his Account of Perſever. p. 11.

[†] In their Declarat. chap. x. n. 4. p. 8, 9. Dr. Twiſs, *Ubi ſupra*, p. 122, &c.

[‡] Mr. Baxter delivers himſelf almoſt in the very ſame words.

Dio. "I told you already, that I am ſatisfied that God hath not entered into covenant, or promiſe, with any unregenerate man, to give him ſaving grace upon any condition to be performed without it. However I am confident, that no man can ſtand out and ſay, I did the beſt that ever I could to obtain ſaving grace, and yet went without it, becauſe God would not give it me."

Car. If that author doth not contradict himſelf, yet, they that hold a man can do no more good than he doth, will confront your confidence; and as far as I can yet apprehend, all they who think that God doth predetermine the will, and produce every act, and every real poſitive modification, muſt be of that opinion: But, Sir, may not all the reprobates ſay, "They go without ſaving grace, becauſe God would not give it them?" I pray, what is negative reprobation, or preterition? Is it not God's will to deny grace ſufficient and neceſſary unto faith and repentance? Hath not the Synod of Dort* concluded "That God decreed to leave all the non-elect in the fall of Adam, and common ſtate of ſin and damnation, and to paſs them over in the communication of grace neceſſary unto faith and converſion? May I not add, that the reprobates may ſay, "I went without ſaving grace, becauſe God could not beſtow it upon me? for his hands were tied up by an immutable decree to the contrary, before ever I had breath or being; and therefore (to be conſtant, that is, to be himſelf) he could not have mercy upon me, though he would."

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* Mr. Baxter of ſaving faith, p. 43, 44.

DIO. But you muſt know the rules amongſt divines is, predeſtination puts nothing into thoſe who are predeſtinated. God's decrees are acts immanent in himſelf, and make no change in the creature.

CAR. You may know too, thoſe divines do ſay alſo, "That God's decree is the rule of his efficiency; and although his intent or decree be an immanent work, and cauſeth no alteration in the creature; yet the execution of that intent and decree is a tranſient work, and cauſeth what alteration God pleaſeth to effect†." Now by God's decree, he hath determined to deny the reprobates grace ſufficient and neceſſary to ſalvation; and conſequently he is, according to that doctrine, wanting in ſomething neceſſary. Hereupon Dr. Twiſs doth confeſs, that "though a man would, he cannot ſhun his damnation; and yet (ſaith he) we do not like this compariſon, that a man can no more abſtain from ſin than ſhun his damnation."

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* Cap. i. reject. 8.

† Mr. Norton's Orthod. Evang. p. 126.

nation*." He profeſſes he doth not like the compariſon; and yet he maintains the doctrine, as it appears from hence. 1. In that he ſaith, God foreknows nothing but what he hath decreed: 2. In that he makes God's permiſſion efficacious in the moſt horrid ſins that ever were committed†. From which two aſſertions it will follow, that a man can no more ſhun ſin than his damnation.

So that I muſt freely acknowledge, I can ſee no truth in that doctrine of Mr. Baxter's‡; where we are told even of the reprobates (for he ſpeaks of the ungodly as contra-diſtinguiſhed to thoſe certain perſons ſo given to Chriſt, as that they ſhall be infallibly drawn to believe) "That if they will uſe the means appointed (for the begetting faith and repentance,) they have very much encouragement from God: both, 1. in the nature of the means which are fitted to their ends, and are mighty to bring down all oppoſitions: and 2. in the commands and inſtitution of God; whoſe wiſdom and goodneſs may eaſily reſolve us, that he will not appoint us means in vain, nor ſet his creatures on fruitleſs labours: and 3. alſo from the iſſue; for no man can ſtand forth and ſay, Such a one did his beſt in the uſe of means, and yet could not attain the end, but fell ſhort of the grace and glory of God." But if our doctrine be calculated right, this is ſo far from truth, that 'tis directly contrary thereto. Here is nothing all along but matter of inſuperable diſcouragement: both, 1. in the nature of the means, which being moral and reſiſtable, is not fitted to the production of an irreſiſtable ſupernatural effect: and 2. in the commands and inſtitution of God; whoſe wiſdom and goodneſs may eaſily reſolve us, that he will not appoint his creatures means, nor exact their fruitleſs labour in the uſe of that means, for the attainment of

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[*] *Ubi ſupra*. p. 74.

[†] Ibid. p. 18, 19, 20. 49. 66, 67. 71. 90.

[‡] In his Directions to prevent Miſcarriages in Converſion, p. 265.

one end, when he hath immutably deſtined them to another: and 3. alſo from the iſſue; for if a man doth perform his beſt, and ſtand forth to alledge it, yet he is ſure to come ſhort of glory; for at laſt ſaving grace is made a propriety to a certain culled-out number of perſons: Hence Dr. Twiſs concludes, "That were a man ſo exact both in natural morality, and in an outward conformity to the means of grace, as not to fail in any particular, as he hath power to perform any particular hereof naturally; in this caſe (he ſaith) if there were any ſuch, he ſhould be in the ſame caſe with thoſe that are guilty of no ſin, but ſin original; which yet the word of God (ſaith he) teacheth us to be ſufficient to make all men to be born children of wrath*." I beſeech you therefore to forbear your upbraiding me for my impenitency and non-converſion, and you may ſuſpend your directions and exhortations too, to promote the work of my new-birth; for if I be of the elect†, God will infuſe the very act of belief, as well as the power of believing, into me, and will produce my regeneration in me without me, by his omnipotent ſtrength, ſo that it ſhall not be in my power to hinder it: and if he pleaſe to have it done by means, he will, at the good hour appointed, provide that goſpel to be preached to me that ſhall infallibly effect it. In the mean while, it will be impertinent and fruitleſs to be ſolicitous, or conſult about it. On the other ſide, if I be none of that number, all the induſtry I can uſe, will not be able to turn common grace into ſaving grace; and beſides, after all my humiliation, care and travail, Almighty God by his immutable and eternal decree, hath as well debarred himſelf of a power to give, as me of a power to receive, that grace that doth accompany ſalvation. ' If you can ſolve this objection, I ſhall be glad to entertain another conference with you: In the mean while I ſhall take my leave, and have recourſe to my counſellor at law, who I hope will not leave me ſo entangled; but give me better ſatisfaction about my purchaſe on earth, than you have done about my portion in heaven.

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* *Ubi ſupra*, p. 48. † Synod Dodrac.

THE SYLLOGISM.

THAT doctrine which makes ſalvation not only uncertain, but alſo impoſſible to the greateſt number of ſouls, how diligent ſoever to obtain it; that doctrine is not ſerviceable to the intereſt of ſouls, not practicable in the exerciſe of the miniſterial function, and not according to godlineſs.

The doctrine of the Calviniſts, as well as that of the more moderate Sublapſarians, as that of the more rigid Supralapſarians, doth make ſalvation not only uncertain, but alſo impoſſible, to the greateſt number of ſouls, how diligent ſoever to obtain it. Therefore,

The doctrine of the Calviniſts, &c. is unſerviceable to the intereſt of ſouls, unpracticable in the exerciſe of the miniſterial function, and not according to godlineſs.

The Major is evident, becauſe it highly concerns the miniſterial function, and the power of godlineſs, and the intereſt of ſouls, to have ſome aſſurance that ſalvation is poſſible to all ſuch, at leaſt, as are diligent to obtain it; for Martinius (at the Synod of Dort) concludes, "That the command and the promiſe of the goſpel are diſannul'ed:" which evacuates the miniſterial function, and the power of godlineſs, if there be not ſuch a ſufficiency of redemption as is really ſufficient for all, and that according to the will and intention of God and Chriſt: "For (ſaith he) however a neceſſity of believing, may be drawn from *a kind of ſufficient grace*; yet if I am not intentionally deſigned ſo to do, what will that ſignify, as to me?" *Of the death of Chriſt for all.* Theſ. 8, 9, 10.

The Minor is apparent from the whole diſcourſe of this ſecond Dialogue.

COLASTERION.

Matth. xxiii. 13. Luke xi. 52.

Ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men, and have taken away the key of knowledge; and them that were entering in, ye hindered.

OTHER PROOFS OF THE MINOR.

God does not procure ſufficient means of ſalvation, for all thoſe whoſe converſion he is ſaid to look for in Scripture. Piſcator to his friend. C. H. c. vii.

Again, c. iv. "God indeed offers grace and ſalvation, in the outward word, to all who are called; but not with a hearty good will they ſhould all be converted.

Again; It reſts with God, that all who are called, do not believe and repent, that is, for want of ſufficient grace.

Martotat. on John xv. 2. ſays, "It therefore ſtands a firm truth, whoever God hath choſen from the foundation of the world, cannot poſſibly periſh: but whoever he hath rejected he cannot poſſibly be ſaved, though he hath done all the works of the ſaints. This ſentance is irreverſible.

Jacob Trigland, (a ſynodiſt) in defence of the doctrine and honour of the reformed churches and preachers, obſerves; "This ſentance of God, which rejects the reprobates, is ſo fixed, and immutable; that it is impoſſible they ſhould be ſaved, though they have performed all the works of the ſaints. And therefore, it is not true, that thoſe who periſh through their own fault, might have been ſaved through grace, if they had not ceaſed labouring for ſaving grace." Thus far he.

END OF THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE III.

DIOTREPHES AND SECURUS.

CALVINISM A SANCTUARY FOR THE SECURE, AND A SUPERCEDEAS UNTO DUTY.

Diotrphes. WELL overtaken, Sir. I pray how far are you travelling this way? If you be for Canterbury, I ſhould be very glad of your company.

Sec. That is the place I am bound for; and if your occaſions lead you thither, we are well met indeed; for a good companion is like a chariot that carries one along with eaſe and delight to his journeys end: And ſuch advantage I promiſe myſelf in this expedition, whilſt the tediouſneſs of the way is beguiled by the charms of your acceptable ſociety and converſation.

Dio. My wiſh is, that, in all our converſation, we ſhould chiefly be engaged about the great concerns of our ſouls; the concerns of eternity: for we ſhould poſt more haſtily to heaven than after the world.

Sec. I am jealous, Sir, that in the way you ſpeak of, there are a great many who make more haſte than good ſpeed; their zeal out-runs their knowledge and diſcretion.

Dio. We muſt not diſcourage zeal for God's cauſe, and God's glory; and things ſhould be eſteemed and purſued according to their excellency. Is not the ſoul incomparably more precious than the world? And is not heaven infinitely of more value than earth? Or can we do too much for God, who hath done ſo much for us?

Sec. Sir, we know God is ſo freely bountiful, he doth not ſet his goodneſs out to ſale before his crea-

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tures. Beſides 'tis evident men may be ſo paſſionate and eager, that they run down the laws and lives of men that ſtand in the way of their pretended zeal; and yet, as we ſay, they may be early up, and never the nearer; they may flatter and pleaſe themſelves in ſuch things as God is not pleaſed in at all. "The time will come ('twas one of the predictions of our Saviour) when they that kill you, will think they do God ſervice." Sometimes this zeal miſcarries; the child is come to the birth, and there is no ſtrength to bring forth; and then the furious zealot, making himſelf obnoxious to the law and power of the civil magiſtrate, brings upon himſelf a ſwift deſtruction, and ſo periſheth with his burden. Hereupon the preacher giveth us ſober advice, "Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyſelf over wiſe: why ſhouldeſt thou deſtroy thyſelf[*]?"

DIO. Raſh men, 'tis true, may over-ſhoot themſelves: but the apoſtle doth commend zeal and fervency of ſpirit in God's ſervice; "'tis good (ſaith he) to be zealouſly affected always in a good matter[†];" and he exhorts the Romans, "to be fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord[‡]."

SEC. If unbelievers, diſobedient and rebellious perſons, be choſen to ſalvation, and it be not in God's power to revoke that election (as the Heſſian divines concluded at the Synod of Dort[§]) I can ſee no neceſſity of obedience: for if God chooſeth us unto ſalvation, that is, if he wills to have us ſaved, being diſobedient; what reaſon is there, why he ſhould not be able to make us partakers of ſalvation, being diſobedient? Is not election the decree of ſaving? and doth not God execute his decree for the ſame reaſon for which he made it? If ſo, why

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[*] Eccleſ. vii. 16. [†] Gal. iv. 18. [‡] Rom. xii. 11.

[§] *De perſever. Aph.* 5. p. 215. par. 2.

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can he not actually ſave us without faith and obedience, as well as decree, or will to ſave us without them?

Dio. He decrees to ſave us merely for his good pleaſure; but he will actually ſave us in a way of juſtice mingled with mercy; and therefore he hath "choſen us in Chriſt*." Now "He that is in Chriſt, is a new creature†."

Sec. It ſeems then, that the execution of the decree is not exactly conformable to the decree itſelf, but contains ſomething elſe beſides it; and then how is that true of the apoſtle‡ "that the purpoſe of God, according to the election, doth ſtand, not of works but of him that calleth?" I am afraid you have gotten a tang of the remonſtrants' doctrine, by your expreſſions: for can any man be in Chriſt, but a believer? I am ſure none but a believer can be a new creature; in affirming therefore (crudely as you do) that God hath choſen us in Chriſt; and adding upon it, "He that is in Chriſt is a new creature:" you do plainly imply, that the object of God's election are the faithful and ſanctified; which the Synod of Dort will tell you is a pernicious error.

The Biſhop of Wincheſter delivering his judgment about the ſecond Lambeth article, as it was amended by the Biſhops and other divines there; whereas the article ſaith, "The moving or efficient cauſe of predeſtination unto life, is not the fore-ſight of faith or perſeverance, or good-works, or any other thing which is in the perſons predeſtinated: but the ſole will of God's good pleaſure§." Biſhop Andrews makes a *quære* concerning that particle, "the ſole will of God's good pleaſure;" whether it doth include Chriſt, or ſeclude him; that is, whether the act of predeſtination be abſolute or relative? "For my part (ſaith he) I think it is relative: neither do I think there is any good will of God towards men; that is, a will, whereby he is well pleaſed towards men, but in his Son, in whom he is well-pleaſed; nor that any one is predeſtinated either before, or without reſpect to, or intuition of Chriſt: But (as the ſacred Scriptures have it) Chriſt is foreknown in the firſt place, 1 Pet. i. 20. then we in him, Rom. viii. 29. Chriſt predeſtinated, Rom. i. 4. then we by him, Epheſ. i. 5. And not we in the firſt place (as ſome think), he in the laſt, and for us. For we cannot be predeſtinated unto the adoption of ſons, but in the natural ſon; nor can we be predeſtinated that we ſhould be conformable to the image of the Son, unleſs the Son be firſt appointed, to whoſe image we ſhould be made conformable. Hereupon that Biſhop would have it added, (to that article*) “the good pleaſure of God in Chriſt.” And though in King Edward’s articles (of 1553.) the 17th article runs thus, “He hath conſtantly decreed, to deliver from curſe and damnation, thoſe he hath choſen out of mankind;” yet in thoſe of Queen Elizabeth, and King James, 1616. we find this addition: “in Chriſt whom he hath choſen in Chriſt.” And conſonantly hereunto, thoſe articles of King Charles (of bleſſed memory,) whereunto he prefixed his declaration, 1631, do run thus: “He hath conſtantly decreed to deliver from curſe and damnation, thoſe whom he hath choſen in Chriſt out of mankind.”

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* Eph. i. 4. † 2 Cor. v. 17. ‡ Rom. ix. 11. § Artic. Lamb. p. 13.

But this, you ſee, overthrows abſolute election; to avoid which, the Synod (though it ſaith, “hath choſen in Chriſt”) hath eſtabliſhed the good pleaſure of God towards ſinners, on this ſide, or before Chriſt’s mediatorſhip and reconciliation†: for election is reſolved by them to be the firſt benefit, and the fountain of all the reſt, upon which depends the deſignation of the Mediator himſelf.

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* *Articulo cuperem addi*. Beneplacitum *Dei in Chriſto. ibid.*

† Chriſt is the meritorious cauſe of *ſalvation*, but not the cauſe of *election*. The cauſe of this is to be ſought for *in the good pleaſure of God, and his gratuitous love*; which, in the order of things, goes before the interceſſion of the Son.---P. Molin’s Confeſſion, among the Acts of the Synod of Dort. part. 1. p. 190.

Dio. Sir, I am perfectly of the Synod's judgment in this point, however you miſtake me. I do not ſay Chriſt is the cauſe or foundation of the decree, but of the things decreed; not of election, as to be eſtabliſhed, but as to be executed; not of election to be decreed through him, but of ſalvation to be obtained by him: he comes under the decree not antecedently, but conſequently; not as the cauſe of that love, wherewith God hath embraced us unto ſalvation, but as a means underlayed to that love: and therefore Chriſt was not given to men, that they might be elected by him; but then, when they were elected he was given, (as Sphanhemius* hath it) "That God might bring us into glory, without any detriment unto his juſtice."

Sec. You do acknowledge then that God hath elected us unto glory without any regard to faith, or any good work whatſoever in us; and that upon the intervention of Chriſt, he may bring us into the poſſeſſion of that glory, without any detriment or impeachment of his juſtice; therefore, as I ſaid from the beginning of our diſcourſe, there is no need at all of our endeavours after good works, or after a a courſe of holineſs and righteouſneſs.

Dio. Sir, you muſt not miſtake us here. Though God do not chooſe us for this antecedent reaſon, becauſe we were holy, yet he choſe us to this conſequent end, that we ſhould be holy; ſo the Synod† have determined in theſe words, "This ſaid election was made not upon foreſight of faith, and the obedience of faith, holineſs, or of any other good quality, or diſpoſition, (as a cauſe or condition before required in man to be choſen) but *unto* faith, and the obedience of faith, holineſs, &c. And therefore election is the fountain of all ſaving good; from whence faith, holineſs, and the reſidue of ſaving gifts; laſtly, everlaſting life itſelf do flow, as the fruits and the effects thereof; according to that of the apoſtle, Epheſ. i. 4. *He hath choſen us* (not becauſe we were, (but *that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love.*

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* Diſpat. Inaugur. Theſ. 5.

† Cap. i. art. 9.

Sec. Sir, I hope you underſtand that holineſs imports a ſtate of ſeparation, which doth not always imply an infuſion of good qualities, or any inherency of them.

But (1) A ſequeſtration from common uſe, as the temple, and the veſſels that did belong to it, were ſaid to be holy.

(2) A ſeparation from that danger wherein others ate inevitably involved, as the words ſeem to be uſed, Rev. xx. 6. Now I am apt to underſtand the text (Epheſ. i. 4.) in this ſenſe, "That God hath choſen us in Chriſt that we ſhould be holy;" that is, that we ſhould be ſeparated from the danger of eternal deſtruction, through his free love, and have no blame laid upon us for our ſins; and this agrees very well with the benefit we have in Chriſt Jeſus, as the apoſtle ſets it down, Col. i. 14. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins." As 'tis impoſſible we ſhould be profitable to him*, becauſe he ſtands in no need of our ſervice†; ſo it is impoſſible he ſhould purpoſe to put trouble on whom he entirely loves‡, becauſe he delighteth in mercy§. Therefore, unleſs you can give me ſome good reaſon why God ſhould enjoin us ſo ſtrictly (as you pretend) to be holy in all manner of converſation, and rich in good works; ſeeing he hath elected us without any intuition or conſideration of them, and through the ſatisfaction of Chriſt; he may actually ſave us, and put us into poſſeſſion

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* Job xxii. 2. † Eccluſ. xv. 12. and Luke xvii. 10.
‡ Lam. iii. 33. § Micah vii. 18.

of glory without any impeachment to his juſtice, I muſt conclude there is no ſuch neceſſity of an induſtrious qualitative holineſs as you imagine; nay, that it would more derogate from the freeneſs of his grace, than any way contribute to the advancement of it.

Dio. Sir, we need ſeek no further for a reaſon hereof, than the holy nature of God, which the prophet hath reſpect unto, when he ſaith*, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity:" and the Pſalmiſt to like purpoſe†; "For thou art not a God that hath pleaſure in wickedneſs, neither ſhall evil dwell with thee; the fooliſh ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight, thou hateſt all workers of iniquity."

Sec. Sir, I perceive you have been too converſant with the remonſtrants' writings; and you are very apt to ſlide into their opinions, ere you are aware of it. Indeed they ſay, though God loved us before he gave his ſon for us, as it is expreſſed, John iii. 16. "yet he did not will us eternal life by that love; but he willed us that, in conſideration of believing in his Son." On the contrary, the orthodox ſay, "that the election of men to eternal life, is the willing of eternal life to them; and that this election is made of perſons to whom Chriſt is not given, but as, and after they are elected; and what manner of perſons are they when they are elected?" The election is made of perſons unclean and wicked in the ſight of God; and ſo Spanhemius (alledged even now by yourſelf): "Chriſt (ſaith he) is not the cauſe of that love, wherewith God embraceth us unto eternal ſalvation." The holy nature of God therefore (which could not only brook us ſo well, but alſo embrace us with ſo flagrant and immutable a love at our election, that) certainly cannot obſtruct the way to our ſalvation, requiring that our multitude of good works ſhould make a throng, and croud in to open the door for us.

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* Habak. i. 13. † Pſal. v. 4, 5.

DIO. I am ſure, Sir, whatever you think of the holy nature of God, the holy will of God, and the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt require it, as a condition and means of our ſalvation.

SEC. 'Tis ſomewhat ſtrange, ſince we make the decree of election to be abſolute, and unconditional, and irrevocable, that we ſhould ſtand (ſo) much upon a ſubordination of means, in order to the execution of it. To my apprehenſion 'tis very abſurd to ſay, ſuch a thing is done abſolutely, and then to affirm that ſuch and ſuch means are preſcribed for the accompliſhment of it. It is as if one ſhould ſay, that Titius had abſolutely given Radulphus an inheritance; but had tied Radulphus to perform certain conditions upon which it is ſuſpended; he muſt do him faithful ſervice by the ſpace of forty or fifty years for it. But I would fain learn how the ſubordination of ſuch a conditonal decree to that abſolute and unconditional, can conſiſt with God's immutability? Do they not make God inconſtant---one while deſtinating men unto ſalvation abſolutely, preſently willing not to ſave them, unleſs the condition of faith and holineſs be performed? I ſee not (as I ſaid) how God's purpoſe, according to the election, can ſtand with this variation that you make betwixt the eternal decree and the final execution of it.

DIO. To ſalve the immutability and conſtancy of God, I ſuppoſe it may be conſiderable, that though election unto ſalvation, and the means of ſalvation, may be diſtinctly conſidered*; yet our divines ſay, they are not diverſe acts in the decree of God; becauſe God, by one only and ſimple act, did determine all theſe things; even as by one only and ſimple act he knew all things from all eternity†. We propound them diſtinctly after our manner of conſideration, in regard of the multitude of objects which are comprehended in this one act of electing; and ſome order is to be acknowledged amongſt thoſe objects too from all eternity: But God determined all at once; and therefore——

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* *Synopſ. Pur. Theol. Diſp.* 24. *Theſ.* 18.

† I do not affirm that in any moment of nature, the decree of ſalvaiton

Sec. Sir, you ſeem to ſay ſomething towards ſatisfaction in this difficulty, but it doth not remove it; for to elect Peter unto ſalvation, is to will to ſave him: Now that God ſhould in one and the ſame ſimple act, will to ſave Peter, an unbeliever, unclean, ungodly, and yet will not ſave him, but as a believer, holy and obedient; I ſay, that God ſhould will both theſe in one and the ſame ſimple act, looks ſo like an implication of contradiction*, that the wit of man can hardly reconcile or underſtand it.

(2.) Let me aſk you ſeriouſly, Can God decree ſalvation and glory to Peter, without any faith or holineſs in him? And can he not bring him to glory without them? Certainly this is either againſt the wiſdom and juſtice of God, if he decrees any thing which he ought not to execute; or againſt his omnipotency, if he cannot bring it to execution, when he hath decreed it.

Dio. Sir, It becomes not us to diſpute the wiſdom, juſtice or power of God; our duty is to regulate ourſelves according to his will; and if we look for the reward of eternal life, 'tis our part to fulfil thoſe conditions which he hath preſcribed us in his holy goſpel to that purpoſe.

Sec. Sir, I obſerve your diſcourſe many times borders upon dangerous errors. Sometimes you recede from the Synod of Dort, and approach the

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vation doth go before the conſideration of faith and obedience. The decrees of giving faith, and crowning it with ſalvation, I make to be not ſubordinate one to another, but ſimultaneous and co-ordinate one with another.---*Dr. Twiſs, ubi ſupra*, p. 13.

* Vide Grevinch. Diſſertatio Theologica. De Duab. quæſt. p. 188. &c.

Remonſtrants; and here you leave them, to gratify the church of Rome. Eternal life is not given as a reward, but as an inheritance; not upon any conditions performed, but of grace freely promiſed. To this purpoſe we have the judgment of the deputies of the Synod of Gelderland (and 'tis inſerted amongſt the acts of the Synod of Dort*) in theſe words: "As we are made ſons, and obtain the right of the inheritance freely; ſo are we alſo moſt mercifully and freely put into the poſſeſſion of that inheritance; therefore it is ill ſaid, that eternal life, as a reward, is decreed and given by God to thoſe that fulfil the conditions which he hath preſcribed; for to give life as a reward upon the performance of a condition, upon which that life was decreed as a reward; (this) is to give life not altogether freely, and of good pleaſure, but of debt." Thus far thoſe deputies; where you ſee they diſclaim all conditions neceſſary unto ſalvation; and good reaſon: for if we were abſolutely elected while we were ungodly; and if Chriſt died for us, while we were ungodly; and if he juſtifies us, while we are ungodly; what ſhall ſeparate us from this free and unchangeable love of God? what ſhall hinder, that we may not be ſaved alſo, while we are ungodly? For if when we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; (and why were we reconciled by the death of his Son, but becauſe he had formerly and freely loved us, and out of that love elected us unto ſalvation, and from that election ſent his Son to die for us? And now having died for us) much more (nay, if any duty were required on our part, more than to our election and juſtification, it ſhould be *much leſs*, and not *much more*) being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life, Rom. v. 10.

DIO. Sir, Divines obſerve a great difference betwixt thoſe three benefits, election, juſtification,

and

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* Par. 3. page 30.

and glorification. Election is abſolutely free, without any qualification in the perſon whatſoever: juſtification is by his faith, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus: but ſalvation is not ordinarily attainable, but through ſanctification unto obedience in all good works whatſoever.

Sec. You will find that amongſt evangelical divines, the more ſound, and ſuch as keep the greateſt diſtance from popery and arminianiſm, do deny faith to be the cauſe or condition of juſtification; their reaſon is, becauſe otherwiſe juſtification ſhould not be free, but of ourſelves: hereupon they conclude that it is called juſtifying faith, not becauſe it juſtifieth, or antecedeth juſtification, but becauſe it is conferred upon ſuch as are juſtified, and in order (if not in time) is after juſtification[*]. “God creates faith in the hearts of his elect, after he hath juſtified them.” And why is this? Only to give them a comfortable teſtimony of their election, and God's love towards them; it doth not juſtify us (conditionally) before God, but declaratively to our own conſciences. And thus he expounds thoſe texts: “A man is not juſtified but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt; we have believed in Chriſt, that we might be juſtified, Gal. ii. 16. and iii. 24. That we might be juſtified by faith.” That is, *Fide cognoſcimus & ſentimus nos eſſe juſtos coram Deo*; by faith we know and perceive that we are juſtified before God, who hath forgiven our ſins, and given us a right to eternal life, for the ſatisfaction ſake of Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs imputed to us.

Dio. I profeſs I am not of thoſe men's opinion: 'tis my judgment that no man is actually juſtified

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[*] *Chriſt. Theol. lib.* 1. *cap.* xxv. *Exp. Theſ.* 6 (*mihi*) *p.* 609. Which he doth not recite as his own opinion. Dr. Twiſs ſeems to be of this opinion; *Ubi ſupra*, p. 142, 143. And ſo Mr. Baxter chargeth him, *Ap.* to *Aphor.* p. 163.

'till he doth actually believe; and that faith juſtifies, as 'tis the performed condition of God's promiſe, as was ſaid above out of Mr. Baxter.

Sec. I remember you ſaid, that "Faith is an effectual acceptance of, and affiance in Chriſt as Chriſt." Now Chriſt as Chriſt, is a king and prophet, as well as a prieſt; and ſo you muſt effectually accept of him, and rely upon him, in his capacity of kingſhip, and your faith muſt be a principle, and an effective principle too, of obedience; and if ſuch a faith be the condition of God's promiſe, and we ſhall not be juſtified, but upon the performance of ſuch a condition, then faith, and evangelical obedience in general, being co-ordinate in their conditionalty unto this work, what is become of the apoſtle's free juſtification? May you not as well deny a free election? and ſay a man is elected and juſtified both by the obedience of good works, and by the faith that is in Chriſt Jeſus! But how contrary is this to the judgment of the deputies of Guelderland, mentioned above! yea, how contrary to the apoſtle, who profeſſeth "knowingly that a man is not juſtified by works*! Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt†." And that you may not pretend there is more required unto our ſalvation, than unto our juſtification, the ſame apoſtle tells us plainly otherwiſe; "For by grace are ye ſaved, (ſaith he) through faith, and that not of yourſelves; it is the gift of God; not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt‡." Would you have your wedding garment of your own ſpinning? Are you deſirous to be found having on your own righteouſneſs? Or as you are cloathed in the ſweet-ſmelling raiment of your elder brother? Hath not Chriſt a two-fold righteouſneſs? and are they not both imputed to the elect? What then? Are we afraid his active obedience is leſs ſufficient to adorn and dreſs us up for glory than his paſſive is to ſecure and ſhelter us from ſhame and torment? If the Holy Scripture proclaims our ſalvation to be as free a benefit, as either that of juſtification or election, why ſhould we give ourſelves the temptation of a needleſs trouble by diſtinguiſhing them?

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* Gal. ii. 16. † Rom. iii. 24. ‡ Epheſ. ii. 8, 9.

Dio. Eternal life is not given but to ſuch perſons as are antecedently qualified by the performance of ſuch conditions as God hath preſcribed in order to it.

Sec. Have I not already ſufficiently overthrown your conditions, by moſt plentiful and irrefragable authority? and find our orthodox[*] divines do infer not only the abſolute decree of election, but alſo a moſt free, inconditionate, and irreſiſtable collation of what is promiſed or affirmed in them reſpectively; and that to be performed in us, without us, as the Synod of Dort determines. Now eternal life being the ſpecial gift of God, as well as the new heart, faith, repentance, &c. if you ſuſpend the obtaining of that gift, upon any condition to be performed by us, you will much endanger the pureſt orthodox doctrine, and give advantage to the Remonſtrants, by the force and example of ſuch interpretations, to invalidate thoſe arguments which are drawn from the ſaid texts, to prove thoſe abſolute decrees, and ſuch an irreſiſtable converſion.

Dio. Sir, I hope you are not ſo great a ſtranger to the book of God, but that you know good works are called for in every page, and upon all occaſions.

Sec. That is not the queſtion, called for, or not called for; but how, and to what end they are called for? I remember well, the divines of Drent, in their *examen*[†] and judgement upon the third and fourth articles of the Remonſtrants, they tell us, a main end why common grace and general gifts are beſtowed upon men, is, for the benefit of human ſociety; and to this purpoſe indeed I find the apoſtle directeth Titus, "That they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works; (adding his reaſon) Theſe things are good and profitable unto men:" But the apoſtle may underſtand lawful trades and callings by good works in that place; but they are not ſuch, which you contend for in order to ſalvation.

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[*] Cenſura Confeſs. cap. xvii. par. 3. pag. 236. & Ameſii Coron. p. 257, 258.

[†] Inter Act. Syn. Nat. Dord. par. 43. pag. 213.

Dio. Nay, Sir, more than ſo; we are exhorted "to be rich in good works, in order to our own aſſurance and comfort, 2 Pet. i. 5. 10. Give diligence, add to your faith, virtue, &c. Wherefore the rather give diligence to make your calling and election ſure." And Maccovius, who defends juſtification before faith, yet he ſaith*, *Quo magis creſcit fides, eo magis etiam juſtificationis ſenſus ſeu fructus uberior emergit*, Rom. i. 17. "The more our faith increaſeth, the more ſweet and plentiful will be the ſenſe and fruit of juſtification that ſprings up to us."

Sec. For that aſſurance, and thoſe reliſhes and conſolations upon it, I am perſuaded they are more boaſted than felt†; when we ſee "thoſe who were once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come‡," may and do fall away totally and finally; whereupon we are taught (according to our doctrine) to believe they lay under the immutable decree of reprobation; how can we (if it be not made ſo by God's decree already) by our induſtry make our calling and election ſure? And therefore I think it prudent, quietly and patiently to ſubmit the event of our lives and ſouls, with the ſame reſolution they ſubmitted the event of the apoſtle's expedition to Jeruſalem, ſaying, "the will of the Lord be done*."

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* *Ubi ſupra.*

† Mr. P. Baine profeſſed he never felt any of thoſe ſuavities.

‡ Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

DIO. Remember, Sir, it is a part of God's will, that you ſhould "work† out your ſalvation:" And the Synod of Dort, having ſet down the nature of God's free election, with the excellent fruits thereof, they add, "That out of ſenſe and certainty of this election, the children God daily draw more and more matter of humbling themſelves before God, of adoring the depth of his mercies, of purifying themſelves, and of loving him fervently, who firſt loved them ſo much."

SEC. What ſenſe and certainty men (that pretend to it) have of their election, I know not; but if they have it, whatever they draw out of it, will afford no leſs matter of eaſe, careleſſneſs, and ſecurity ordinarily, than of gratitude; for the certainty of the end, excludes the uſe, at leaſt all care of the means.

DIO. I deny that doctrine; and we find the contrary by plain Scripture, practice, and experience. Was not Daniel‡ informed of the Jews' deliverance by God's word and promiſe? and Chriſt§ certain his death ſhould be deferred, 'till the final accompliſhment of his office and miniſtry in his ſtate of humiliation? and Peter|| propped up in his hopes, by our Lord's prayer and promiſe that his faith ſhould not fail? Did they therefore neglect the means? nay, did they not forthwith addreſs themſelves earneſtly to the uſe of them?

SEC. Though the inſtant deliverance of the Jews from captivity was revealed to Jeremiah, yet uncertain to begin the computation (as is obſerved by commentators upon Daniel ix.) Daniel knew not whether thoſe ſeventy years were yet expired, or whether God might not defer the redemption of the people for their ſins; for Daniel knew by the ſame Jeremiah, "That at what inſtant God ſpeaks concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant it; if it doth evil, and obey not his voice, then he will repent of the good wherewith he ſaid he would benefit them," Jer. xviii. 9, 10. He had read the oath of God in the book of Numbers, "Ye ſhall not come into the land concerning which I ſware to make you dwell therein, ſave Caleb the Son of Jephunneh, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun:" But "ye ſhall know my breach of promiſe:" Numb. xiv. 30. 34. Daniel therefore had good reaſon to make prayers unto Almighty God out of a holy fear, leaſt God for their ſins ſhould lengthen out the term of their captivity; and thus, whenever an end is intended conditionally, and a promiſe made to that purpoſe; the performance of the promiſe being ſuſpended upon the performance of the condition, in this caſe the means are to be purſued with diligence, that having fulfilled the condition, we may have a title to the promiſe; but when the end is intended, and the promiſe of it made abſolutely, that gives us a ſuperſedeas to all further care about it.

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* Acts xxi. 14. † Phil. ii. 12,
‡ Jer. xxix. 10, &c. Dan. ix. 2. § John viii. 20. || Luke xxii. 32.

Dio. In Peter's caſe, I ſuppoſe the end, "That his faith ſhould not fail," was abſolutely intended, and the promiſe and prayers of our Saviour of that import.

Sec. You may as well conclude the promiſe and prayer of our Saviour did import he ſhould not ſin at all; for our Saviour prayed (though not that his Father ſhould not take him out of the world, yet) "that he would keep him from the evil of it," John xvii. 15. Yet we ſee he was not ſo kept; but he fell into evil, and fell under it too. Our Saviour's prayer therefore, and his promiſe were conditional: his faith ſhould not fail, if he did repent, and bewail his fall: hence the Lord ſaid to him, "And thou, when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren;" Luke xxii. 32.

Dio. But this is not applicable to our Saviour's own caſe: the end was abſolutely intended, *His preſervation to the laſt period*, 'till he had accompliſhed his miniſtry (ſo far as concerned his ſtate of humiliation) he could not poſſibly be cut off; and this he was aſſured of.

Sec. Chriſt was certain that the miniſtry committed to him ſhould not want a happy ſucceſs; yet ſo, as if he did diligently fulfil all the parts of his office and duty. He was certain his death ſhould be deferred even to that very hour which his Father had prefixed (though ſome deny that hour to have been preciſely determined of his Father) if he took his frequent advantages to eſcape the hands and malicious machinations of his enemies, which we find him careful to do upon all occaſions: And here that obſervation may take place of the truth of a logical connexion betwixt the antecedent and the conſequent, when both of them, taken apart, are falſe. It was true, certainly true, that if Chriſt had fallen ſooner into their malicious hands, he had been ſooner cut off; but (conſidering his care and prudence to avoid it), that he ſhould fall into their hands, or be cut off ſooner, were both falſe.

Dio. However, Sir, 'tis moſt certain, God hath decreed the ſalvation of the elect, by tying the end and the means together: "For whom he predeſtinated, them he alſo called; whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified," Rom. viii. 30. Therefore "when it is objected to us (ſay the Belgic profeſſors*) that the ordination of means is ſuperfluous, if the elect, by ſome antecedent act, be abſolutely deſtinated to ſalvation; this ariſeth from the mere ignorance of the orthodox doctrine: for God did never chooſe any man abſolutely unto ſalvation, if by abſolutely we exclude the means which God hath ordained for the obtaining of ſalvation; but that ordination unto ſalvation, in the purpoſe of God, hath always from eternity, in the very ſame act, conjoined with it a conſideration of thoſe means which are neceſſary unto ſalvation. Whereupon St. Paul alſo ſaith, 2 Theſ. ii. 13. God hath from the beginning choſen you unto ſalvation through ſanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; and St. Peter, 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. "To the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and the ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt."

Sec. If the end be abſolutely intended, then either there are no means required; or if they be required, they are abſolutely by an irreſiſtible ſtrength to be wrought by him, who abſolutely intends the end; for if God abſolutely intends an end, and leaves it to be accompliſhed by contingent and fallible means, thoſe means may be deficient, and ſo God ſhould fail of his end; which were abſurd.

Dio. This is that which the Synod of Dort affirmeth of faith, and the works of regeneration; for, they ſay, "This is a work, to the production whereof God employeth his omnipotent ſtrength; (chap. iii. and iv. reject. 8.) A work for the mightineſs thereof not inferior to the creation of the world, or raiſing up the dead, which God worketh in us; but (not with us, but) without us: an operation ſo carried on, that when God hath done his part, it remains not in man's choice to be, or not to be re-

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[*] *Synopſ. Pur. Theol. Diſp.* 24. *Theſ.* 19.

generated; to be or not to be converted;" (art. 12. reject. 8.) To this purpoſe Mr. Norton having laid it down for a rule (in his Orthodox Evangeliſt) that "though the decree be abſolute, yet the diſpenſation of the decree in the goſpel is conditional." He adds, "yet here carefully obſerve, That by a condition we are always to underſtand, not a condition properly ſo called, but a conſequent condition; namely ſuch a condition, the performance whereof is not left unto the elect, but is undertaken for by the elector; and therefore is not only not oppoſite unto, but is both an effect and argument of an abſolute decree, and alſo of an abſolute covenant of grace.

Sec. Theſe paſſages have reference to the infuſion of faith, and the work of our firſt converſion; and perhaps this doctrine looks no further: and then there is not ſufficient proviſion made for the infallible accompliſhment of an end that is abſolutely intended; though the regeneration of the elect be abſolutely immediately, and irreſiſtibly wrought by the ſtrength of God's omnipotency; yet if the work be left in the hand of the ſame elect, as their duty to be continued, ſuch is their frailty and fallibility, they may poſſibly miſcarry in it, and ſo God ſhould loſe his end for all that; which is very abſurd to be affirmed of an end which he hath abſolutely intended.

Dio. You need not fear this; for as God begins the work, ſo he carries it on irreſiſtibly by the ſame power, to the very laſt ſtage and period of our lives. Hence Cornelius Dungan ſaith†, "Such as the operation of grace is in the beginning, ſuch it is alſo in the progreſs:" And Dr. Twiſs‡ ſaith; "God's omnipotency no creature is able to reſiſt; and therefore if God will have any man to believe, repent, do this or that good work, it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe; and that God is he who worketh in us

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* Page 85, 86. † Pacific. p. 172. ‡ *Ubi ſupra*, p. 178

us that which is pleaſing in his ſight, is as true as the epiſtle to the Hebrews is a part of the New Teſtament: and page 182. We do require that God ſhould immediately and irreſiſtibly work all our good works in us, and we acknowledge this to be neceſſary unto every good act, and no grace without this ſufficient to will and to do; though there may be without this, a grace ſufficient to its being poſſible."

To this purpoſe 'tis very remarkable, what the Britiſh* divines (who were accounted *ſtupor mundi*) have delivered in their judgment concerning the fifth article (of perſeverance) at the Synod of Dort, *Falſum eſt*, ſay they, *Perſeverantiam eſſe donum ſub conditione oblatum*. " 'Tis falſe, that perſeverance is a gift offered upon condition; for it is a gift abſolutely promiſed of God, without any reſpect of condition."

Sec. I thank you, Sir, for this part of your diſcourſe; wherein you have moſt clearly proved by the doctrine of the Synod, the divines thereof, and others, that the opinion I have been all this while diſputing for, is exactly true; that is to ſay, " 'tis altogether needleſs for any man to take care to do any thing for his ſalvation?" for though it be true that the end (ſalvation) is conditional; yet the means to that end, are granted abſolutely and irreſiſtibly to the elect. 'Tis true, none but believers and converts ſhall be ſaved; but 'tis as certainly true, that all the elect ſhall firſt or laſt (at God's appointed time) one way or other (by God's appointed means) be irreſiſtibly brought to repent and believe: But the non-elect being paſt by in the ſtate of ſin, as Adam left them, and the ſaving grace of faith and repentance denied them; they can never be ſaved, firſt or laſt, by one means or other, God having appointed neither time nor means (effectual) to that

purpoſe,

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* *Theſ. Heterod. quas rejicim* 3. p. 200. par. 2.

purpoſe, (why then ſhould they trouble themſelves about it ?) And this is the more unqueſtionably certain, in that God hath from all eternity, irrevocably eſtabliſhed theſe decrees, to illuſtrate and ſet forth the glory of his good pleaſure, ſovereign power, mercy and juſtice.

DIO. I wiſh you would remember that great day of revelation[*], which will be a day of diſcrimination too; when God ſhall ſeparate the precious from the vile, and divide the ſheep from the goats; you would be glad to find mercy of the Lord in that day[†]: You muſt ſeparate yourſelf from the communion and practice of the wicked in this life, if you would be divided from their portion in the life to come; if you do not diſtinguiſh yourſelf from them here, you will never be diſtinguiſhed from them hereafter. You muſt abandon the company of the wicked, and aſſociate yourſelf with the godly, and conform your judgment and opinions, your life and converſation unto theirs[‡]; and then you may be ſure to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need: The prophet Malachi[§] tells you of a book of remembrance that was written before the Lord; but for whom? "for them (only) that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name; and they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will ſpare them, as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him."

SEC. Sir, I am ſorry to ſee you ſo far inclinable to a dangerous error; for you ſpeak as if it were in man's power to contribute ſomewhat towards his own diſcrimination[||]; and if you think ſo, it is evident you do at leaſt favour the doctrine of free-will, if you have not perfectly eſpouſed it: and this you know is diametrically oppoſite to the apoſtle, whoſe words are theſe; "For who maketh thee to differ from another; and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive, &c[*]?" Here we are inſtructed, ſaith Mr. Calvin[†], That what endowments ſoever Almighty God beſtows upon us, we muſt remember they are not our goods, but God's free gifts.

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[*] Rom. ii. 5. Matth. xxv. 32. [†] 2 Tim. i. 18.
[‡] Heb. iv. 16. [§] Mal. iii. 16, 17.

[||] See Dr. Ward's Twelve Arguments, *in concione ad Clerum. ad Phil.* ii. 13.

Dio. I confeſs a man is able to do nothing towards the differencing of himſelf; but yet he is ſo frequently called upon to repent and believe, that I cannot but conclude there is ſome duty incumbent upon him to this purpoſe.

Sec. Sir, this is all one, as if you ſhould ſay, you grant the premiſes, but deny the concluſion. As for the giving, or denial of faith and repentance, Dr. Twiſs tells us[‡], "Herein we willingly profeſs, that God carrieth himſelf abſolutely throughout; not only decreeing theſe according to the mere pleaſure of his will, without all conſideration of ought in man; but giving them alſo unto ſome, and denying them unto others, according to the mere pleaſure of his will, without the conſideration of ought in man." Why then ſhould you tell me of any duty incumbent upon me to the procuring of theſe graces? Can it conſiſt with the wiſdom or juſtice of God (much leſs with his goodneſs) to tie me to endeavour after them, when he hath not ſuſpended the beſtowing them upon the performance of any ſuch conditions, but wills and hath decreed to give them abſolutely?

Dio. I pray who tells you, that it is Almighty God's good pleaſure to beſtow faith and repentance abſolutely, without any condition performed on our part?

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[*] 1 Cor. iv. 7. [†] Inſtit. l. 3. c. vii. n. 4.

[‡] *Ubi ſupra*, p. 42.---Hereupon he concludes, that in the work of Regeneration we are merely paſſive. Ibid. p. 27.

SEC. I gave you the authority of Dr. Twiſs even now for it; I will alſo add his[*] arguments for your ſatisfaction. "One of his invincible arguments (for all his are reputed ſuch) is drawn from Bradwardine's demonſtration, that no will of God is conditional, but abſolute throughout. The demonſtration is this: If there be any conditional will in God, the condition of that will of God, is either willed by God or not. If not willed by him, then that muſt be acknowledged to come to paſs in the world without the will of God, which he holds for a great abſurdity; but if that condition be alſo in ſome ſort willed by God, then either abſolutely or conditionally; if abſolutely, then alſo the thing conditionated, ſhall be abſolutely willed by God. As for example: if God doth will that a man ſhall be ſaved, in caſe he believe, and withal doth abſolutely reſolve to give him faith, and make him believe; this is in effect abſolutely to reſolve to ſave him: But if it be ſaid, that the condition ſpoken of is willed by God, not abſolutely, but conditionally; then a way is open to a progreſs *in infinitum*, which all diſclaim: For, as touching that ſecond condition, I will renew the former argument, enquiring whether that be alſo willed at all by God, or not? and if it be, whether it be willed abſolutely or conditionally? So that either we muſt ſubſiſt in ſomething that is abſolutely willed by God; and conſequently, all that depend thereupon, as conditionated, ſhall in like manner be abſolutely willed by God; or a progreſs from one condition to another, and that without end, cannot be avoided." This is Dr. Twiſs's demonſtration, taken from Bradwardine; and Mr. Baxter[†] triumphs in the uſe of it, againſt the author of the examination of Tilenus.

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[*] *Ubi ſupra*, p. 68.

[†] In his Preface to the Grotian Religion, Sect. 9.

But this is not all: for the Doctor hath another irrefragable argument, "to prove that faith and repentance are not conferred by God upon man conditionally; to wit, upon the performance of ſome condition by man; for (ſaith he*) if it were ſo, then theſe graces ſhould be conferred according to men's works, which is clearly and undeniably ſtark pelagianiſm. So that all endeavours after faith and repentance, are not only impertinent, but 'tis hereſy alſo to maintain, that the beſtowing of them depends upon any of our performances."

DIO. Sir, if you will receive what that Reverend Doctor holds forth in another place, you will underſtand his opinion more fully. He is not againſt the uſe of means for the obtaining faith and repentance: take his words at large. "God (ſaith he) hath regard both of our faith and prayers; not that upon the foreſight hereof, he did elect us; but in that as he did ordain us unto everlaſting life, by way of reward of our faith, repentance, and good works; ſo likewiſe he did ordain us to the obtaining of faith, repentance, and good works, to be wrought in us; partly by the miniſtry of his word, therein ſpeaking unto us; and partly by our prayers, ſeeking unto him, to bleſs his word unto us, and fulfil the good pleaſure of his goodneſs towards us, and the work of faith with power; for God doth expect, that we ſhould ſeek unto him by prayer for this; as we read, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Neither do we maintain that God doth ordain any man of ripe years unto eternal life, in any moment of nature, before he ordains him to faith, repentance, and good works; and that to be wrought in him by the miniſtry of the word, with God's bleſſing thereupon, according to the prayers in common, both of the paſtor and the people." This is the Doctor's opinion fully.

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* *Ubi ſupra*, p. 161, & 152. † Ibid. p. 195, 196. &c.

Sec. If the Doctor will contradict himſelf, who can help it? and 'tis evident he doth contradict himſelf, if he ſuſpends the beſtowing of faith and repentance, upon our hearing and prayers, as conditions impoſed upon us for obtaining them.

2. If to hear and pray be a work of ours, 'tis pelagianiſm in the Doctor's opinion, to ſay, that God gives faith according to them: for ſuppoſing Tilenus's meaning to be "that God is ready to work faith in man upon a condition*;" he diſputes againſt it in theſe words; "Now what is that condition? Can it be any other thing, than ſome work of man? And what follows here hence, but that God gives faith according to men's works? which (ſaith he) is pure pelagianiſm, condemned for hereſy in the church of God from time to time."

3. And therefore elſewhere this Doctor declares the invalidity of the word to this effect, and ſlights the uſe of prayers in order towards it, in theſe ſcoffing words, "†This author would have men effectually called by virtue of their prayers."

4. Hereupon I ſhall ſatisfy myſelf with that reſolution of the point, which I find given by Dr. W. Spurſtow‡; having propounded a diſtinction concerning the promiſes, which is this; "There are promiſes of grace, and there are promiſes which are made to grace. The one (ſaith he) are abſolute, as that they do not depend upon any grace in us foregoing, or ſuppoſe any good qualifications in us to be partakers of them; ſuch are the promiſes of converſion and regeneration, in which grace makes way for itſelf, and works all the initial preparations, without any concurrence or activity on our part; we being as fully paſſive in our ſecond-birth, as we are in our firſt-birth; in our regeneration, as in our generation."

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* *Ubi ſupra*, 46. † Ibid. p. 84, 85,

‡ The Wells of Salvation opened, chap. vii. ſect. 1. Rule 2. p. 67.

Dio. But the ſame Doctor tells us in the ſame place, "* That the abſolute promiſe of converſion, and giving of ſpiritual life, though it have a kind of oppoſition unto conditional promiſes, in not requiring that aptitude and qualification of the ſubject by grace for the fulfilling of it, as the other (promiſes of pardon and glory) do for the performance of them; yet it is not abſolute in oppoſition to the uſe of external means, which God hath appointed as a neceſſary way to obtain converting grace; for as the decrees of God, though peremptory and unchangeable, do not exclude the endeavours of the creature, and the working of ſecond cauſes: no more doth the abſoluteneſs of God's promiſe, in converſion, ſhut out, but rather include the uſe and exerciſe of all means that lead to the end:" Thus Dr. Spurſtow.

Sec. How far the abſoluteneſs of God's promiſe doth ſhut out the uſe of means, we ſhall further ſee hereafter; in the mean while, I pray what is the means you think ſo neceſſary to be exerciſed in order to our converſion?

Dio. I ſhall give you my anſwer in the words of Dr. Twiſs †; "I know no induſtry of man (ſaith he) required to his effectual vocation (which is converſion) but the hearing of God's word."

Sec. He required hearing of God's word, and prayer too, even now; and hath he caſhiered half his means already? But to let that paſs, I pray reſolve me whether it be poſſible, for a man without faith, to hear after ſuch a gracious manner as will be acceptable to Almighty God? For if he cannot perform the duty graciouſly, he may, inſtead of obtaining grace, come under that reprehenſion (even given to performances under precept, for want of ſuch gracious manner in the circumſtances) "‡ Who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts?"

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* Ibid. & ſeq. † *Ubi ſupra*, p. 84. ‡ Iſai. i. 12.

Dio. "Some natural actions are required, without which a man cannot be converted, (ſaith Dr. Twiſs). As for example; it is required a man ſhould be acquainted with God's word, which alone is the ordinary means, whereby the Spirit works in man's converſion. Now it is in the power of man to hear the word: and albeit he cannot hearken unto it in a gracious manner, pleaſing unto God, yet ſhall not that hinder the efficacy of God's word, if God be pleaſed to ſhew mercy on him: No, though he comes to the hearing of it with a wicked mind. As they that came to take Chriſt, John vii. yet when they heard him, were taken by him, and returned without him, ſaying, *Never man ſpake like this man.* So is it in the power of a man to read the word. Now ſuppoſe he exerciſeth this power, and that with a mind averſe from it; yet may this word prove a word of power, to the changing of his heart." Thus far Dr. Twiſs.

Sec. Why this is a full confirmation of what I have been contending for, that it is impertinent and needleſs for a man to take care for his ſalvation; 'tis no matter with what affections he addreſſeth himſelf to the means of faith and repentance; for tho' he doth it with a wicked mind, with a mind averſe from it, yet that ſhall not hinder the efficacy of God's word, if God be pleaſed to ſhew mercy on him. He hath no reaſon therefore to trouble himſelf about "*laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envy, and all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and to receive with meekneſs the engrafted word, which is able to ſave the ſoul." But I remember you told me long ſince, that God ordains men to faith, repentance, and good works; and that to be wrought in them by the miniſtry of the word, with God's bleſſing thereupon, according to the prayers in common, both of the paſtor and the people. Now, Sir, I would fain be ſatisfied, whether, if a man doth carefully join himſelf unto theſe ordinances, he may be aſſured of his converſion?

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* 1 Pet. ii. 1.

Dio. No, "the execution of God's goodneſs toward's him is not haſtened by a man's hearkening to God's word; for though men do hear it daily, yet are they not forthwith brought to faith;" ſaith Dr. Twiſs*.

Sec. If a man cannot promiſe himſelf a bleſſing in his careful attendance upon the ordinances, and affording his preſence to hear the word; to what purpoſe (as I ſaid) ſhould he trouble himſelf about it?

Dio. Dr. Spurſtow† tells you, "though theſe be ſuch actions which have no immediate influence to the begetting or working of grace, yet are they ſo far neceſſary, as that no man can promiſe unto himſelf that ever he ſhall be converted, who doth either neglect or refuſe the uſing of thoſe means, in which God is pleaſed to diſpenſe his free and undeſerved grace." Thus Dr. Spurſtow.

Sec. As he cannot promiſe himſelf to be converted without theſe means; ſo neither can he promiſe himſelf to be converted with them? becauſe, as you ſay, from the Doctor, they have no immediate influence to the begetting or working of grace. Upon the whole matter therefore, it comes all to a reckoning, whether he applies himſelf to the uſe of theſe means, or no.

Dio. "Not ſo; for though converſion be ‡wholly and only from God himſelf, yet it is ordered by him to be effected by the uſe of means. As phyſicians put their phyſic into certain ſyrups and liquors, which are the vehicles of medicine, not at all of themſelves operative, but ſerviceable to the medicine that works the cure: So doth God by his ordinances, which are canals *gratiæ*, channels and conduit-pipes deſigned for grace to run in, convey and diſpenſe the precious bleſſing of a new and ſpiritual life, to thoſe upon whom he is pleaſed to beſtow it. And therefore the plea of thoſe, is both weak and impious, who contemptuouſly turn their backs upon the preaching of the word, and other external helps, as needleſs and unneceſſary to converſion, it being God's ſole work."

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* Ibid. 84, 85. † *Ubi ſupra.* ‡ Dr. Spurſtow, *Ubi ſupra*, p. 70.

Sec. I pray reſolve me this queſtion; whether hearing the word be of abſolute neceſſity to converſion?

Dio. I ſhall give you my opinion in Dr. Twiſs's[*] words: "We willingly grant (ſaith he) that information of the underſtanding is neceſſarily required both to faith and to repentance, otherwiſe they were not acts rational; but that this information ſhould be made by the miniſter, that is, I confeſs, ordinarily required by virtue of God's ordinance, but not neceſſarily:" and he upbraids Tilenus as little ſenſible of any ſuch diſtinction.

Sec. Seeing God hath determined not to beſtow[†] his (ſaving) grace at all, upon the greateſt number of mankind; and before he hath beſtowed faith and regeneration upon them, it is utterly uncertain[‡] by ordinary means, both whether he hath determined to beſtow any ſuch grace upon them, and whether Chriſt died for the procuring of any ſuch benefit unto them; and ſeeing the[§] exhortation of the word, without a more ſpecial operation of God's Spirit, is no provocation at all to believe; and God doth many times work faith without the miniſtry of the word (which are the affirmations of that great divine); why may I not as well depend upon the extraordinary (which when it comes is likely to work upon me inſuperably) as to wait upon the ordinary means, which I have no aſſurance at all ſhall be effectual?

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[*] *Ubi ſupra*, p 115.
[†] Dr. Twiſs, *Ubi ſupra*, p. 128.
[‡] p. 116.
[§] p 117.

Dio. "When God will give any man ſaving grace, ordinarily he will do it by the means of grace. He that hath appointed his ordinances to that end, will ſo far ſtand to his own appointment, and honour his own ordinances as to work by them, and not ordinarily without them. If men therefore will not uſe God's means, no wonder if they go without his grace. For firſt, ſuch are out of the way of grace; and when they avoid the cauſes, they cannot in reaſon look for the effects. Secondly, and moreover, they do provoke God to withold and deny his grace, when they ſet ſo light by it, as that they will not ſo much as uſe the means to get it." Treatiſe of Converſion, p. 229.

Sec. Here are ſo many infirmities in this piece of your diſcourſe, that it will be a trouble to repeat them. (1) You intimate that grace flows from the uſe of the means, as the effect from the cauſe; which is no leſs contrary to experience, than to the judgment of Dr. Twiſs. (2) You would inſinuate that God denies his grace only to ſuch as provoke him by their neglect of the means; whereas Dr. Twiſs ſaith, he determined the denial of it, for his mere pleaſure, without any conſideration of any thing done by man. So that a man may be very diligent in the uſe of means, and yet fail of the grace of God, merely becauſe it is not God's pleaſure to give it him. (3) You inform us, that God will ſtand to his own ordinances, becauſe of his own appointment; and for their honour, when he will give any man ſaving grace, he will work it by them. Is it worſe to abſent one's ſelf from thoſe ordinances, than to preſent one's ſelf to them with an averſe and wicked mind? This (ſaith Dr. Twiſs) cannot hinder God's operation; and why ſhould that? eſpecially ſeeing (as you imply) God hath his extraordinary ways to diſpenſe his grace, as well as ordinary.

Dio. " Our ſafeſt way is to take our precedent and direction from the apoſtle's admonition to *Timothy. The ſervant of the Lord muſt inſtruct them with meekneſs that are contrary minded, if ſo be at any time God will give them repentance, &c. Therefore it becomes us continually to wait for this time, and not to preſcribe unto God. And why may not this preſent be the time† ? Why then ſhould you defer the hearing of God's word, whereby alone is our calling (ordinarily) wrought ? For this being God's appointed means, if a man hears it, though with a purpoſe only to oppoſe it, either in general, or in ſome particular truth thereof; yet (he may receive the grace of converſion for all that) this humour of oppoſition cannot hinder God's word, and the operation of his Spirit where he will, in ſpite of their conceits, who thought the apoſtles were filled with new wine, when three thouſand were converted that day. But‡ how is it poſſible that God ſhould bring a man to a ſermon, while he lies lazy in his bed ? Such a one is out of the way of grace ; and, as Mr. Baxter§, hath it, when he avoids the cauſe, he cannot in reaſon look for the effect.

Sec. I pray, Sir, anſwer me a few queſtions, in order to my further ſatisfaction in that we diſcourſe about; and the firſt I ſhall propound to you is this: Whether God hath not exactly prefixed the punctual time for the converſion of every one to whom he intends his effectual grace ?

Dio. Yes, this time is prefixed of the Lord, unalterably, as is reſolved by J. R. in his Chriſtian ſubject||, approved and licenſed by Mr. Edmund Calamy. This time is called by the Synod of Dort, " the¶ hour of more plentiful grace;" by Mr. Bax-

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[*] Dr. Twiſs, *Ubi ſupra*. p. 134. [†] Page 84. [‡] Ibid. 181.
[§] *Ut ſupra*. [||] Page 2. [¶] Cap. i. art. 16.

ter*, "God's ſeaſon;" by Dr. Twiſs, "the time appointed."

SEC. My ſecond queſtion is; Whether God hath alſo preciſely appointed the individual means, for the converſion of ſuch perſons to whom his effectual grace is deſigned?

DIO. Yes, when God executes his good pleaſure in the elect, or works true converſion in them, he doth not only procure the outward means, but alſo applies the inward efficacy of the regenerating Spirit; as the Synod of Dort hath determined, cap. iii. & iv. art. 11. See at large.

SEC. My third queſtion is; Whether God can fail in the time prefixed, to accompliſh that work of converſion in ſuch perſons?

DIO. He cannot, becauſe he is wiſe and conſtant. To this purpoſe Dr. Spurſtow's† obſervation is conſiderable. "If the wiſdom of God (ſaith he) hath to common mercies, wherein his enemies have a ſhare, ſet ſuch appointed times, as may make them more uſeful and beneficial to his creatures: certainly he will not fail to perform to his people the promiſes of his free grace in that ſeaſon and fulneſs of time which may beſt ſuit with their welfare and his glory." He makes converſion one of thoſe promiſes. Ibid. p. 66, 67.

SEC. My fourth queſtion is this; Whether God can be diſappointed of his means or no?

DIO. No, the reaſon is plain; He is not only wiſe, but alſo omnipotent. "God's omnipotency (ſaith Dr. Twiſs‡) no creature is able to reſiſt; and therefore if God will have any man to believe, to repent, to do this or that good work, it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe.——And that God is he, who works in us that which is pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, is as true, as that the epiſtle to the Hebrews is a part of the New Teſtament."

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* But how doth this conſiſt with his ſo moving conſiderations to convince men of their folly of delay?

† *Ubi ſupra*, p. 63.

‡ *Ubi ſupra*, p. 178.

Sec. My fifth queſtion is this: Whether any of them, for whom effectual grace is deſigned, be able to reſiſt that grace, when the ſeaſon or good hour is come; or to receive it ſooner, if they ſhould endeavour after it?

Dio. This *quære* conſiſts of two branches; but I ſhall ſatisfy them both in the words of Dr. Twiſs*, who hath taught us thus to diſtinguiſh. "We willingly confeſs (ſaith he) that as often as men are found to reſiſt theſe divine exhortations (to faith and repentance) though delivered by God's miniſter, they may juſtly be ſaid to reſiſt God working morally, and beſeeching them, as the apoſtle ſpeaketh, 2 Cor. v. 20. As though God through us did beſeech you. So the Jews with their fathers reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt, Acts vii. 51. Foraſmuch as the words delivered unto them, and which they reſiſted, were ſent by the Lord of Hoſts in his Spirit, by the miniſtry of his prophets, Zech. vii. 12. And accordingly God is ſaid to have teſtified againſt them by his Spirit, by the prophets; but they would not hear, Neh. ix. 30. But they do not reſiſt, nor can reſiſt, the Holy Ghoſt, working immediately, and phyſically, upon their wills, the act of converſion, and phyſical or rather hyperphyſical tranſmutation. We willingly confeſs (as the Doctor goes on) that the elect reſiſt neither, tending to their firſt converſion, provided the time be come which God hath appointed for their converſion; 'till then they reſiſt all exhortations, tending thereunto, as well as others; but as to any divine act for a phyſical tranſmutation of their wills, they are not made partakers thereof 'till the time of their effectual calling." Thus far Dr. Twiſs.

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* *Ubi ſupra,* p. 115, 116.

Sec. Give me leave to aſk you a ſixth queſtion: Whether in the deſignation either of time or means, God had any conſideration of any qualification as wrought, or to be wrought in man, or of any compliance in him, that at ſuch time, ſuch means might be the more congruouſly applied for his converſion?

Dio. No; for that were ſtark pelagianiſm, a giving of grace according to man's works. To avoid which, we willingly profeſs (as I told you already from Dr. Twiſs[*]) that God carrieth himſelf abſolutely throughout; not only decreeing theſe (graces of faith and repentance) according to the mere pleaſure of his will, without all conſideration of ought in man; but giving them alſo unto ſome, and denying them unto others, according to the mere pleaſure of his will, without the conſideration of ought in man.

Sec. I pray reſolve me one queſtion more: Is it poſſible for any man, by any means, or any diligence in the uſe of that means, to attain unto theſe graces, when God hath decreed to deny them to him? or is it poſſible for any man, through any perverſe oppoſition, to fail of them, when God hath decreed to beſtow them upon him?

Dio. To this I ſhall anſwer you in the very words of Mr. Dyke[†]. He propounds a ſhift that is rife (as he ſaith) in the mouths of the prophane, "that it is vain and bootleſs to take any pains in godlineſs;" for if they be ordained to deſtruction, it will nothing advantage them; they ſhall loſe all their labour; if to ſalvation, though they live never ſo wickedly, it ſhall nothing prejudice or diſadvantage them; they muſt need come to their appointed end. To which ſhift he applies theſe words, by by way of antidote: "But theſe muſt know, that it is impoſſible, either for a reprobate to live godly, or

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[*] *Ubi ſupra*, p. 42.

[†] In his Myſtery of Self-deceiving, p. 245.

an elect always to live lewdly and looſely; for the ſame God that ordains the end, ordains the means." And Dr. Twiſs[*] ſaith as much; for he confeſſeth it is impoſſible for them (reprobates) to ſhun damnation; and for the elect[†], he confeſſeth alſo, it is impoſſible for them to diſobey, or not to be induſtrious, when God will have them to be induſtrious.

Sec. Sir, You have moſt plentifully confirmed what I have been all this while attempting to prove unto you, "that all endeavours, whether to obtain life or avoid deſtruction, are utterly impertinent and needleſs;" for who[‡] but a fool, or a mad-man, would trouble his brain, or ſpend his labour about impoſſibilities?

Dio. But Sir, without a ſpecial revelation (which is rare and extraordinary) a man cannot be certain of his election, (and conſequently cannot enjoy the comforts of that apprehenſion) but by and through his effectual calling, the means whereof he is therefore carefully to attend.

Sec. That alters not the caſe at all: for if the man be a reprobate, his knowledge of that eſtate, though it may torment him before the time, it cannot enable him to avoid ſo ſad a deſtiny: and if he be elected, though the aſſurance of that condition be attended with never ſo much happineſs, yet that aſſurance is not attainable before his effectual calling (as you confeſs), and the time hereof is prefixed unalterably; ſo that he cannot be regenerated, repent and believe ſooner or later. If you ſhould therefore addreſs your exhortation to him to repent; he replies to you, "If I be elected to the end (ſalvation) I am elected to the means too." What that means is, extraordinary or ordinary, I know not; whether affliction, the voice of God's rod; or preaching the voice of his word; whether your ſermon,

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[*] *Ubi ſupra*, p. 74.

[†] Ibid. p. 84.

[‡] Matth. vi. 27.

mon, or another man's: But God knows which (infallibly), and hath as infallibly decreed to bring me to it; and I am no more able to abſent myſelf from that means, than to reſcind and alter God's immutable decrees. Why then ſhould I not ſtay, and expect the good hour, 'till God by ſuch an irreſiſtible efficacy draws me unto that end, through the means of his own appointing? I am ſure, neither my neglect of ordinances, nor my flagitious crimes, can cancel the decree of my election. You may think it impoſſible that a prophane careleſs wretch ſhould be ſaved; but 'tis no leſs impoſſible, that an elect veſſel, how prophane and careleſs ſoever, ſhould be damned." The divines of Great Britain*, have determined this moſt judiciouſly, in their ſuffrage upon the fifth article of Perſeverance, (explic. Theſ. 4.) "It is impoſſible that Paul elect ſhould periſh: it is impoſſible alſo that Paul, a blaſphemer of Chriſt, and an unbeliever, if he dies in this ſtate, ſhould not periſh: ſo it is impoſſible that David elect ſhould periſh; it is alſo impoſſible that David, an adulterer, and murderer, if death arreſts him in his impenitency, ſhould not periſh. They ſay, that the Divine providence and mercy doth eaſily untie this knot; by taking care that none of the elect ſhall die in that ſtate, wherein, according to any ordination of the Divine will, he ſhould be excluded from eternal life." This is the judgment of thoſe profound divines.

Dio. Thoſe divines I am ſure do conclude, (and in thoſe very paſſages too) that the end is not to be attained but by the uſe of the means; and God's acting in that means, doth not exclude, but aſſiſt and encourage ours. Nehemiah therefore doth thus exhort the nobles, rulers, and the reſt of the people: "Be not ye afraid; remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your

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* *Ubi ſupra*, p. 193.

your ſons and your daughters, your wives and your houſes; (for) our God ſhall fight for us," Neh. iv. 14. with ver. 20.

Sec. The queſtion (now) is not concerning the the conjunction of the end and means; but concerning the neceſſity of man's care about the uſe of that means. I grant the firſt, but deny the laſt. Why ſhould I leſs truſt God with the means, than with the end? Are they not alike abſolutely intended? If any advantage be, 'tis on the part of the means; for (as you cited the words of the Britiſh divines) the end (eternal life) is deſigned and promiſed, but conditionally (if we do believe) but the means (faith and repentance) are promiſed abſolutely. And ſeeing God hath by his immutable decree, abſolutely undertaken for that means; and that not only as to the kind, but alſo as to the irreſiſtible application and working of it; it is ſo far from being a duty, that it ſeems to be a ſinful diſtruſt to be ſolicitous about it. We ought not to diſtruſt God's power (for the accompliſhment of ſalvation in the elect) for that is almighty; nor his will, for that is immutable. To doubt of either, is to ſin againſt his omnipotence or immutability. If Chriſt paſſeth his word for Peter's ſecurity, in walking on the ſurface of the water; as weak as the foundation is, his faith is weaker, and to blame, if he fears ſinking. When the means are abſolutely determined, and the application and working of them abſolutely undertaken for by Almighty God, his revelation that is it ſo, gives us a ſatisfying confidence about it. In that battle where the watch word is, "the ſword of the Lord, and of Gideon![*]" there, that exhortation is no leſs needful than ſeaſonable: "Be not diſmayed, fight; for the Lord fighteth for you[†]." We muſt (in this caſe) blow our trumpets of ram's horns, and break our empty pitchers, and advance our lights. If God promiſeth victory but upon condition only, we muſt dutifully addreſs ourſelves to the performance of that condition, though, to our apprehenſion, it contributes little or nothing to the event or bleſſing promiſed: But where God abſolutely intends and promiſes a victory, there the word is, "Ye need not fight in this battle; fear not, ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord, which he will ſhew to you; the Lord ſhall fight for you, and ye ſhall hold your peace*. And they that ſhould lay hold upon the ſword and ſpear, and ſtand upon their own guard, and poſtures of defence in this caſe deſerve as ſharp a reprehenſion, as that our Saviour gave to his diſciples, (not truſting his divine preſence as ſufficient to bridle and curb that tempeſt): "Why are ye fearful or doubtful, O ye of little faith †?"

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[*] Judges vii. 18. 20.

[†] Deut. xx. 3.

Dio. That God's promiſe of the, end doth not acquit us of the uſe of the means, we may ſee in the example of King Hezekiah: He was ſick unto death: but upon his devotions, his prayers, and tears, God was pleaſed to ſend his prophet to him with a joyful meſſage of his reſtitution: "Behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years," Iſai. xxxviii. 5. And yet, to ſhew they ſhould not rely upon God's intent and promiſe for the end, without the uſe of the means, the prophet commanded, "Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaiſter upon the bile, and he ſhall recover‡." And the example of the apoſtle's voyage is very memorable, Acts xxvii. wherein being in extreme danger by reaſon of the tempeſt, the angel of God (at laſt) appears to Paul, ſaying, "Fear not, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee", (ver. 24.) Yet, to ſhew the uſe of means was neceſſary for the obtaining the end (the ſafety) here promiſed, the ſame Paul, when he ſaw "the ſhip-men about to flee out of the ſhip, ſaid to the centurion, and to the ſoldiers, Except theſe abide in the ſhip, ye cannot be ſaved," ver. 30, 31.

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* 2 Chron. xx. 17. Exod. xiv. 13, 14.

† Matth. viii. 26. and chap. xiv. 31.

‡ Ibid. ver. 21.

Sec. In theſe examples 'tis evident, by the very letter of the text, that as well the ſeveral ends intended, as the promiſes about them, were ſuſpended upon ſeveral conditions, and thoſe conditions not abſolutely undertaken (as are thoſe for the ſalvation of the elect) to be performed by God himſelf, but preſcribed and left to the care of thoſe concerned in them. And had not that plaiſter of figs been applied by thoſe about him, Hezekiah had not recovered: and had not the centurion and ſoldiers kept the ſeamen in the ſhip, they had ſuffered ſhipwreck: But if the Lord had abſolutely decreed the recovery of Hezekiah by ſuch a plaiſter, and had abſolutely promiſed too, that he would infallibly apply it himſelf, the prophet had been (at leaſt) impertinent in preſcribing the application to be made by others that attended on him.

In like manner, had the Lord abſolutely decreed the ſafety of all the paſſengers in the ſhip, upon condition of the mariners' preſence and labour in it; and had abſolutely promiſed to make good the condition alſo, that is, inſuperably to cauſe thoſe mariners to abide and labour therein, (which is the very caſe in the matter of ſalvation) Paul's[*] jealouſy of the ſeamen's departure out of the veſſel, had been culpable, and his motion to the centurion and ſoldiers impertinent; nay, his advice and acting herein had been ſo far from prudence and a duty, that it had argued in him a piece of infidelity, a diſtruſt of God's power and faithfulneſs. That Naaman may be cleanſed, he is enjoined to waſh ſeven times in the waters of Jordan; but had God abſolutely promiſed to cut a channel, to bring thoſe waters into his bed-chamber, he had at leaſt been improvident, to take ſo long a journey, when he might have had the ſame benefit of cure in his own lodgings. Let me offer you but one example to illuſtrate the caſe touching God's abſolute promiſe: It was God's ſpecial command, Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24. "Thrice in the year ſhall all your men children appear before the Lord:" But how ſhall their land be ſecured in the mean time (when all the fighting men are drawn away?) God makes an abſolute promiſe to defend it: For (ſaith he) "I will caſt out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither ſhall any man deſire thy land, when thou ſhalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year." Be not afraid to leave your cities and your houſes without watch or defence, to come to my temple to ſerve me; for I will defend you from all aſſaults*." Sure, in this caſe, it had been a piece of diſtruſt and infidelity in them to have provided guards againſt any invaſion of the enemy.

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[*] Epiſcopius ſays: The words of Paul, Acts xxvii. 31. are clearly *hypothetical:* or contain a threatening *upon ſuppoſition*; which undoubtedly argues the revelation that was made him not to have been a *decree*, or an *abſolute promiſe*, but a *conditional* one.---Either Paul's threatening was falſe, if the promiſe made him was *abſolute*, and he had ſo underſtood it; or if the threatening was true, the promiſe he had, was not made abſolutely, but conditionally.

DIO. Sir, I pray give me leave to open my mind freely to you; (for I am almoſt at my *ne plus ultra*, and ready to take my leave of you:) "Why, do you not conſider what madneſs it would be to argue about men's bodies, as you do of their ſouls? †It is as true that God hath decreed how many years and days you ſhall live, as that he hath decreed whether you ſhall be ſaved: and I will refer it to your own reaſon, what you would think of the wit of that man, that would give over eating and drinking, and ſay, *God hath decreed how long I ſhall live, and if he hath decreed that I ſhall live any longer, I ſhall, whether I eat*

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* Annot. Diodati.

† Mr. Baxter's Treatiſe of Converſion, p. 292, 293.

and drink, *or not* ; *and if he hath not decreed that I ſhall live*, *it is not eating or drinking that will keep me alive ?* What would you ſay to ſuch a man but this : ‘ That God decreeth no man to live, butby the ordinary means of living ; and therefore ordinarily, if you will give over eating and drinking, it is certain that you will give over living; and that God hath made no decree to ſave you alive, whether you eat and drink, or not. So if a man ſhould have a journey to go on life or death, what would you think of that man that will ſay, “ If God hath decreed that I ſhall come to my journey's end, I ſhall do it, whether I go or not ; and if he hath not decreed it, I ſhall never come thither, though I travel ever ſo hard. This is true : But if you hence infer, that therefore it is as good to ſit ſtill as go, you will ſhew your own folly, and not procure an excuſe for your neglect. Why, even ſo it is in our preſent caſe : If you will ſay, if God hath elected me, I ſhall be ſaved ; and if he hath not, I ſhall not, whatſoever I do, and therefore I may ſpare my pains ; it is no wiſer, than to give over eating and drinking, becauſe God hath decreed how long you ſhall live ; or to give over travelling, becauſe God hath decreed whether you ſhall come to your journey's end. Will you be thus mad about the matters of your trades and callings in the world ? Why do not all the weavers in this town then give over their trades, and ſay, “ If God hath decreed that I ſhall live well and be rich, I ſhall be ſo, whether I labour or not ; and if he have not, my labour will not ſerve ?” Why do you not give over ploughing and ſowing, and ſay, “ If God hath decreed that I ſhall have a crop, I ſhall have one, whether I plough and ſow, or not ; and if he hath not, I ſhall not, whatſoever I do ? If you will needs be fools, let it be about theſe worldly things, which you may better ſpare : try your own opinion awhile, and give over eating and drinking, and working ;

working; but do not befool yourſelves about the one thing neceſſary; and play not the madman about the flames of hell, and do not in ſuch jeſt throw away your ſalvation. It were an hundred times a wiſer courſe for a man to ſet his houſe on fire, and ſay "If God hath decreed the ſaving of it, the fire ſhall not burn it; if he have not, it will periſh, whatſoever I do." I tell you again, God hath not ordinarily decreed the end without the means; and if you will neglect the means of ſalvation, it is a certain mark that God hath not decreed you to ſalvation: But you ſhall find that he hath left you no excuſe, becauſe he hath not thus predeſtinated you. *Treatiſe of Converſion*, page 292, 293.

Sec. Sir, I perceive this diſcourſe hath much inflamed you, you melt ſo much upon it; and I believe you are pleaſed with it as a piece of rhetoric that you hold convincing and irrefragable: But for my part I muſt tell you ſeriouſly, I never heard a more confident piece of impertinency in my whole life. To reflect a littleupon your laſt paſſage: in the firſt place you ſay, "God hath not ordinarily decreed the end without the means:" What is this to the purpoſe? Yes, for then, as you go on, "If you neglect the means of ſalvation, it is a certain mark that God hath not decreed you to ſalvation:" And who can help it? 'tis your own doctrine out of the Synod, and the divines thereof lately mentioned, That whom he was pleaſed to decree unto ſalvation, he abſolutely decreed to it; at leaſt he abſolutely decrees it to make the means of ſalvation irreſiſtibly effectual unto them. For the reſt of mankind, poor wretches! they are paſſed by, and left in the common ſtate of miſery, under the conduct of the decree of reprobation, to be fitted for the triumphs of Divine juſtice, at the great aſſize and day of doom: Well therefore may they play the madmen (if they liſt) about the flames of hell: but 'tis no more in their power to eſcape them, than it is for them " in jeſt to throw away ſalvation,' whereof they had never had ſo much as a poſſibility As God decreed them to another end, ſo doubtleſs, by your doctrine, to other means; for he " hath not ordinarily decreed the end without the means," you ſay; and " if you neglect this means, you ſhall find that he hath left you without excuſe (you ſay), becauſe he hath not thus predeſtinated you." I pray, of whom ſpeak you this? of the elect? Are they left without excuſe? or can they neglect the means of ſalvation? Then they may periſh for all their predeſtination. Or do you ſpeak it of the non-elect? Are they predeſtinated thus? either to the end, or to the means of ſalvation? How came they to fall then from that end? and how comes this means to be ineffectual to them? But if God hath predeſtinated them, neither to the one nor to the other, how ſhall they find that he hath left them " no excuſe, becauſe he hath not thus predeſtinated them?"

But you demand, Why men do not try their opinion about their bodies, ſtates, and ſecular affairs, as well as about their ſouls? " Then (you ſay) they would ſoon perceive the folly and madneſs of it." Shall I give you a reaſon? I think I need not: you know the power of ſelf-love and intereſt; and the advantage that ſenſual objects have to inſinuate themſelves, through the neighbourhood of their abode, and the ſuitableneſs of their pleaſures to fleſh and blood: But in relation to eternal life, ſelf is to be denied, and intereſt to be laid aſide, and luſt to be mortified, and pleaſure to be abandoned. Many and great difficulties there are to be conteſted againſt; and all this for an inheritance inviſible, at a great diſtance; for a reverſion laid up for us in another world. You ſee, Sir, the ſtate of the ſoul, comes upon many diſadvantages to engage a man's affections and endeavours, after the uſe of means for her ſalvation, in compariſon of the body. If this be not ſufficient, you may find perhaps better ſatisfaction in that ſermon, *of making light of Chriſt*, page 15, 16. But the plain truth is, (ſet aſide ſome few hypocondriacal perſons, or ſuch as are diſtracted) men do not make this experiment upon their bodies, becauſe they are not of that opinion generally, having had few or no ſermons preached, concerning the fatal period of life, to inſtil ſuch doctrine into them. Will you affirm that God hath preciſely decreed the final period of the malefactor* ? Will it not follow then, that he hath no leſs preciſely decreed the crime that brought him to it, (to his end at the gallows) ? How then will you free God from being the author both of his ſin and ruin ?

For your inſtance of eating and drinking, 'tis not very appoſite to this purpoſe : Meat and drink are a certain known means to preſerve life, while God pleaſeth to continue it ; and we have natural appetites†, in proportion to the needs we have of ſuch proviſions ; and faculties that never fail, while they are in temper, to digeſt thoſe proviſions, and turn them into the very ſubſtance of our bodies, to refreſh and ſtrengthen them : But for the means of ſalvation, that hath no ſuch eſſential property ; it was never deſigned to feed the ſoul of any non-elect perſon to eternal life ; no nor yet the elect neither (though they frequent it never ſo diligently) 'till that good hour comes, wherein God hath preciſely decreed, by the ſtrength of his omnipotency, to make it irreſiſtibly effectual. Beſides, if God did intend and promiſe abſolutely to feed us (as he doth to ſave the elect) in that caſe we need take no thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat, or what ſhall we drink ? but might rely upon the nurſery of his ſecret providence, knowingly, and with confidence, for the preſervation of our lives, as well as we did unwittingly depend upon it, for our nutriment and formation in our mother's womb. Sir, I hope you are of opinion, that a man muſt honeſtly earn, or buy his bread before he eats it; but he were a very idle perſon, that ſhould go to market, and a madman, that ſhould ſeek his bread at the peril of his life, as they did, Lam. v. 9. If God had abſolutely promiſed, that "the barrel of meal ſhould not waſte, nor the cruſe of oil fail*;" or that he would command an angel†, or a raven to feed him, in his private cell. If God doth abſolutely undertake to feed us, whatever our wants be, 'tis an act of infidelity to tempt God, ſaying, *Can God prepare a table in the wilderneſs*‡?

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* See Eccleſ. vii. 17. Job xv. 32. Chap. xxii. 16. Pſal. lv. 23. Jer. xvii. 11. and Prov. ix. 11. Chap. xx. 27. Exod. xx. 12 and many others.

† Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats.

For your traveller, I need not bear him company very far in this expedition. If the Lord makes it a part of Philip's duty to baptiſe the Eunuch, he commands him, ſaying, "Ariſe, and go towards the ſouth; and go near, and join thyſelf to this chariot," Acts viii. 26. 29. But if he abſolutely intends to have him at Azotus, to officiate thereabouts, he takes care to conduct him by the miniſtry of his own Spirit, ver. 39, 40. When God abſolutely undertakes our paſſage (as 'tis ſaid he doth in our way to heaven) 'tis our duty to truſt him at the helm, and not preſume to put our own hands upon it. And for your other inſtance of plowing and ſowing; though in our ordinary courſe of huſbandry, he that doth not plough and ſow, ſhall not reap; yet when God hath made an abſolute promiſe (as 2 Kings xix. 29.) "Ye ſhall eat this year ſuch things as grow of themſelves, and the ſecond year that which ſpringeth of the ſame;" he doth not dutifully comply with Divine Providence, that will plough and ſow for all that, and

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[*] 1 King xvii. 14. [†] 1 King xix. 5, 6. Chap. xvii. 4.
[‡] Pſal. lxxviii. 19, 20.

not reſt ſatisfied in a thankful expectation of the fruits of ſo gracious a promiſe and diſpenſation. To come to your laſt, and maddeſt inſtance of all; I cannot allow it a wiſe courſe, for any man to ſet his houſe on fire, that he may gain a proof whether God hath (in that caſe) paſſed a decree to ſave it from burning. I know God grants us no ſuch licence; and if we take it of ourſelves, 'tis a preſumption in us to dream that he will prevent the miſchief that is like to enſue ſo groſs a folly. But in our caſe, the houſe was ſet on fire by our firſt parents, many thouſands of years before we were born, and nothing but the blood of Chriſt is of ſufficient force to quench it. That your compariſon may be pertinent, we may frame it thus: Suppoſe all the houſes in your town were ſet on fire, and God had abſolutely decreed that all but ſix ſhould be burnt to aſhes, and that the uſe of all means whatſoever ſhould be utterly ineffectual to their preſervation; nay, and for the preſervation of thoſe ſix too, 'till his omnipotent power did determine thoſe your ſix neighbours irreſiſtibly to uſe that means to extinguiſh the fire in thoſe their ſix houſes; If you ſhould proclaim this to your whole town, as a truth from the mouth of God, and they find grounds to believe you; how many, though you ſhould call never ſo earneſtly upon them, would be ſo ridiculouſly diligent, as to fetch their ladders and buckets, and attempt to quench the flame?

Dio. That the end and the means are tied together, you do not deny; and that God's work in providing and applying the means, doth not exclude ours in the uſe of it, I ſhall ſufficiently confirm, by that earneſt exhortation of the apoſtle, Phil. ii. 12. "Work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do, of his good pleaſure."

Sec. The queſtion is of the mode; whether God hath undertaken to perform this work abſolutely and irreſiſtibly, or conditionally only? That is, in other words, whether thoſe that are thus exhorted, be really in any danger of miſcarrying, under this work of God in them, for want of their own co-operation and diligence therein? We ſuppoſe the men to be regenerate, by the character the apoſtle gives of them; and if they be in no danger of miſcarrying, then what need they be ſolicitous? Let them caſt all their care upon God's good pleaſure, who worketh to will and to do in them. All they have to do, is to take up this reſolution, *the will of the Lord be done:* For God's abſolute undertaking to perform the work, doth diſcharge us from all duty and care about it, as our Saviour hath taught us in that inſtance, Luke xxi. 14, 15. "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye ſhall anſwer; for I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay nor reſiſt." In like manner, if God doth abſolutely undertake to effect our converſion and perſeverance, it will be our part to ſettle it in our hearts not to be careful about it.

Dio. I confeſs, I dare not ſo far queſtion the wiſdom and ſincerity of that holy apoſtle, as to think he would put his diſciples in fear, where no fear is; he would not delude them with a vain ſhadow of terror, neither would he be ſo vehement, if we were not in ſome danger of ſeduction. His frequent and earneſt exhortations unto caution, circumſpection and vigilancy, do imply a poſſibility of defection. Why ſhould he elſe make ſuch inferences as theſe upon the apoſtacy and backſliding of others: "Let him that (truly) thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall," 1 Cor. x. 12. and Rom. xi. 20. "Be not high-minded, but fear." Theſe, and a multitude of the like expreſſions, are ſufficient evidence, that God intends not to diſcharge us of our duty; but by all poſſible means to oblige us to it, and ſecure our diligence in the performance of it.

Sec. Very good, Sir: I perceive, whatever you be in your opinion and doctrine, you will be a Remonſtrant at laſt in your application and practice. I have brought you to your journey's end, and you are welcome to Canterbury: But my affairs call me further; I commend you therefore to God's protection, and leave you to reflect upon that diſcourſe that hath paſſed betwixt us.

Dio. I pray God be with you, and ſend you good ſpeed in your affairs.

THE SYLLOGISM.

THAT doctrine that is inſufficient to convince the Secure of the neceſſity of their endeavours after converſion and holineſs; and tends rather to lull them aſleep in their ſecurity, than awaken them out of it—That doctrine is not according to godlineſs.

The doctrine maintained by the Calviniſts in oppoſition to the Remonſtrants, is inſufficient to convince the Secure of the neceſſity of their endeavours after converſion and holineſs, &c. Therefore,

The doctrine maintained by the Calviniſts in oppoſition to the Remonſtrants, is a doctrine not according to godlineſs.

The Major is evident of itſelf.

The Minor is proved by the diſcourſe in the preceding dialogue.

COLASTERION.

Matth. xv. 6.

Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect.

OTHER PROOFS OF THE MINOR.

TO ſuppoſe, antecedently to faith, any difference between the upright and others, is very abſurd; ſince *converting grace* makes all the diſtinction. 1 Cor. iv. 7. Mareſ. in his Socinian Hydra, vol. ii. p. 264.

So far is God from having reſpect to previous diſpoſitions, in beginning regeneration, that, on the other hand, the fartheſt from the kingdom of Heaven, and thoſe who are very deeply ſunk in the dregs and darkneſs of hell, are called. Maccovius, in his Miſcell. Queſt. Diſput. I. p. 394.

God does not work faith in thoſe who yield to, and co-operate with his grace; but in thoſe who reſiſt and oppoſe it. Piſcator to his friend. C. V. 2d anſwer, chap. iv. p. 156.

God infuſes faith into us, finding us reluctant; as formerly in reluctant Paul. The ſame, p. 160.

It is not our work, that we believe; but ſolely God's. The ſame, p. 157.

It is not God's will, that men ſhould do more good, than in reality they do: or omit more evil, than they do omit. The ſame, chap. i. p. 177. Alſo Maccovius, 2 Diſputation throughout.

All things are done from the irreſiſtible decree of God: yea, whatever *bad* actions, they alſo are neceſſarily done. The ſame, p. 168.

All good and bad actions, are done from the neceſſary decree of God. The ſame, p. 212.

It is all a fooliſh conſultation concerning thoſe things which neceſſarily come to paſs. D. Burleigh's Hiſtory of the Lambeth Articles, p. 6.

END OF THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE IV.

CALVINISM A PLEA FOR THE PRESUMPTUOUS, AND AN ACQUITTANCE FROM REPENTANCE.

DIOTREPHES AND PRÆSUMPTUOSUS.

PRÆSUMPTUOSUS. SIR, the occaſion of my waiting upon you at this time, is to requeſt the benefit of your miniſtry: God hath been pleaſed, of his good providence, to give me a child, which was yeſterday brought forth into the world, and I deſire, the next Lord's-day, to have it baptized.

DIO. I am not ſatisfied that I may adminiſter the ſacrament of baptiſm to your child: for had we ſuch a man as *Solomon* in his ſin to deal with, we ought to uſe him as an ungodly man. So thoſe that have lately committed ſcandalous, notorious ſin, and will not, on ſufficient perſuaſion, manifeſt any ſatisfactory repentance for it; we muſt preſume them ungodly, 'till they will manifeſt repentance: for we know, except they repent, they ſhall periſh; and an undiſcovered repentance is to us as none. And our divines at Dort conclude, that though a godly man loſe not his juſtification by groſs ſinning, yet he contracts ſuch an incapacity of coming to heaven in that ſtate, that that muſt be removed, or elſe he could not be ſaved.

PRÆ. It ſeems ſtrange to me, that perſons who for the preſent have a real actual intereſt in Chriſt, (as all juſtified perſons are ſuppoſed to have) ſhould, at the ſame time, have no right to his inſtitutions, and be in an incapacity of ſalvation. Is Chriſt *theirs*, and are not his ſacraments *theirs* too? Are the *ordinances* more ſacred and precious than the *Redeemer?* But they are incapable of ſalvation, you ſay. Doth not this make a foul flaw in the apoſtle's chain, Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he juſtified, them he alſo* *glorified?* But, Sir, (though your words ſound that way) I hope you do not hold that a child of God can fall *totally* from the ſtate of grace?

DIO. "* We do not maintain that the children "of God cannot fall from grace, albeit they ſhould "let the reins looſe to their luſts to commit ſin, and "that with greedineſs: but, to the contrary, we "teach, that God keepeth them from falling away, "by *putting his fear into their hearts*; according to "that, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will put my fear in their* "*hearts, that they ſhall never depart away from me.* "So that the right ſtate of our tenet is not that "God will keep them from falling away, in ſpite of "their preſumptuous courſes; but that he will keep "them by him, through an holy fear: which is as "much as to ſay, he will hold them faſt by him, "by keeping them from preſumptuous courſes; "and accordingly David, after he had prayed that "God would cleanſe him from his *ſecret faults,* he "entreats God, that as touching *preſumptuous* ſins, "he would *keep him from them*, that ſo he might "be *innocent from the great offence.* And as this "was David's prayer, ſo anſwerable hereunto was "Paul's† faith: *He will deliver me from every evil* "*work*, (to wit, either by obedience, or by re-"pentance, or elſe from every preſumptuous courſe) "*and preſerve me to his heavenly kingdom.* And ac-"cordingly, the ſaints of God, as they are ſtiled his "*called ones*, his *ſanctified ones*; ſo likewiſe are they "denominated his *reſerved ones*, in the Epiſtle of "Jude: for his courſe is to make them meet par-"takers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light; "not to ſave them in ſpight of their unfitneſs for it, "but to make them firſt fit for it by holineſs, and "then to make them partakers of it."——Thus Dr. TWISS.

PRÆ. The children of God then, are always free ſree from, at leaſt, a courſe of *preſumptuous* ſins; Paul's faith, and David's prayer, (which are *theirs* too) do ſecure them from ſins of that nature. But, ſhould they commit ſuch ſins as would make ſo foul a flaw in their ſtate of ſalvation, as to put them into an incapacity of heaven; I doubt whether it could be ſoldered up again by repentance. Repentance is a metal ſo heterogenous and different, I am afraid it would never hold; for as nothing in the world but Chriſt, and that evangelical grace of his procuring, can put us into the ſtate of ſalvation; ſo certainly nothing elſe can reſtore us to it, if we make a receſſion from it.

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* Dr. TWISS, *ubi ſupra*, p. 29, 30. † 2 Tim. iv. 17.

Dio. Why, repentance is a part of the goſpel, and one of the conditions of the covenant of grace.

Præ. I am taught otherwiſe by the deputies of the Synod of Gelders, and their judgment is recorded amongſt the acts of the Synod at Dort*; wherein they declare, that "Repentance is not always preſcribed with an intention of ſalvation; that is, hath not Chriſt for its foundation:" and that "to be called unto repentance is not the grace of the goſpel: For this (grace of the goſpel) is offered in Chriſt alone, and for Chriſt alone, and always with intention of eternal ſalvation." So is not repentance, as they ſay.

Dio. It is not ſufficient to conſider how the grace of the goſpel is offered; but we muſt conſider withal how it is to be received, and how to be kept.

Præ. I ſuppoſe there is little diſpute about that amongſt the orthodox; faith is concluded to be the ſole inſtrument or condition of receiving and preſerving this grace. To this purpoſe it is delivered with great approbation, as a branch of modern divinity, that "† in the covenant betwixt Chriſt and his, there is no more for man to do, but only to

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* *De Artic. ſecundo*, p. 100. par. 3.

† The Marrow of Modern Divinity, p. 119. Edit. 3.

know and believe that Chriſt hath done all for them."

Dio. This muſt be a lively, active faith; not a dead one: and ſuch we ought to conclude his to be, who lives in groſs ſins.—" I nothing doubt, " (ſaith Dr. Twiss*) but a carnal Chriſtian may be " orthodox throughout, and perſuade himſelf of a " true faith: But if his life be not anſwerable, we " will be bold to tell him that his faith is vain; " for true faith *worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6. And " faith working by love, is as much *as a new crea-" ture*, Gal. vi. 15. And *whoſoever is in Chriſt, is a new " creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. And *they that are Chriſt's, have " crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts*, Gal. " v. 24. Therefore, where ſuch a new creature is " wanting, where the fleſh is not crucified with the " affections and luſts, they are not Chriſt's, nor in " Chriſt, nor have any faith working by love."

Præ. Whatever Dr. Twiss ſaith, in his paſſion, againſt his adverſary; I am confident he is far from affirming, that the children of God do loſe their faith, as often as they commit the works of the fleſh. The divines of Drent † (at the Synod of Dort) tell us very roundly, It is falſe; and that not only in reſpect of the *habit* of faith, but in reſpect of the *act* of faith too. " The act of faith doth oftentimes remain even then when a man ſins." And a little after, " What hinders the ſaints, that they ſhould not feel the effect and acting of their faith at the ſame time, when they commit the groſſeſt ſins?"

Dio. Sure you cannot think, they can believe unto ſalvation, at that time of their groſs ſinning, when they contract ſuch a guilt and incapacity of coming to heaven, that if it be not removed by repentance, they cannot be ſaved; as you had it before from the divines of England, at the ſame Synod.

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* *Ubi ſupra*, p. 102. † *De Perſev. Examen.* Theſ. iv. p. 275. par. 3.

Præ. Sir, I wonder you or they ſhould offer to ſay, That the ſaints or godly may fall into ſuch a ſtate, wherein they cannot be ſaved; when there is ſuch an abſolute decree paſt for their ſalvation, as neither themſelves, nor ſin, nor hell, nor devils can fruſtrate; nay, the power of God himſelf is not able to reſcind it. This is the judgment of the Haſſien [*] divines, at the Synod of Dort; they ſay, "It is God's immutable counſel to preſerve his elect in the true faith, even unto the end; and through that (faith) to bring them infallibly and neceſſarily to eternal ſalvation; which counſel of God cannot be made void by any creature; no nor ever be revoked, in regard of his immutability, by God himſelf." And this, Sir, is the only ſanctuary that I flee unto for refuge; this the only rock that my hope anchors on.

Dio. But you muſt firſt be ſure to be ſet upon this rock, before you can prudently build your hopes and confidence upon it.

Præ. Sir, I have good aſſurance that I am of the number of the elect; and the decree of election layeth a certain ground of perſeverance; and the faithfulneſs of God is by his promiſe engaged for it on their behalf. Account of Perſever. [†] page 33, and 37.

Dio. I would not have you too confident of your own ſtate; 'tis the advice of the apoſtle, [‡] "Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall."

Præ. Such as have no other evidence [§] but their own conjectures and ſeemings, that they are in a ſtate of grace, have reaſon to be jealous: But I hope you will not offer to lead me into an opinion that the elect can fall totally and finally from the ſtate of ſalvation; for * that is an error of dangerous conſequence, againſt the grace and fidelity of God; if not againſt his wiſdom and his power, and againſt the peace of the ſaints: and therefore is to be carefully avoided and reſiſted, by thoſe that would not wound their faith. [*Ubi ſupra*, page 14.

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[*] De Perſever. Aphor. 5. p. 215. *par.* 2.

[†] By Mr. Baxter.

[‡] 1 Cor. x. 12.

[§] Ameſius ſaith, the Scripture doth not exhort *the truly faithful to the fear of rejection*; but ſome, who are faithful in profeſſion, to ſee that they ſtand, 1 Cor. x. 12. they are exhorted not to truſt too much to their outward profeſſion. Bel. Ener. Vol. IV. l. vi. Chap. iii. th. 1. n. 2. p. 173.

Dio. That is not the thing I tempt you to; I am certain if you be elected, you ſhall be ſaved; but I would have you be upon ſure grounds, before you pretend to ſo great an aſſurance of your election. That you have obtained this aſſurance by an immediate revelation and teſtimony of the Spirit, I hope you will be more modeſt than to affirm.

Præ. Sir, I do not pretend to any enthuſiaſtical aſſurance. A certainty of election may be had; and the Synod of Dort (at leaſt, moſt of the divines thereof) do conclude, that every elect perſon hath it ſooner or later before his death †; and 'tis the faith of the congregational churches expreſſed in their late declaration ‡, "That men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be aſſured of their eternal election." So alſo ſay the Weſtminſter Aſſemblers.

Dio. I ſhall not diſpute that with you; I know it is the general tenet of the orthodox: but you muſt remember the apoſtle's exhortation, "Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure." Your effectual calling, make that ſure firſt, and then your need not doubt your election; for none are effectually called but the elect only, as the congregational churches § have declared.

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* Mr. Baxter.

† See the Apology for Tilenus, page 493.

‡ Chap. iii. n. 8.

§ Chap. iii. n. 6. and Syn. Dort. cap. ii. art. 8.

Præ. Sir, I am able to tell you not only the man, but the very text he preached upon, with the day and hour when I was effectually called. I confeſs time was, when I lay among thoſe looſe corns that were very fit to have been blown off, but ſuch a faſt ſermon did I hear from N. N. as melted my heart and ſpirit into that frame and temper, that I ſhall never forget it. This ſermon was a preparation to the ſolemn league and covenant; and I was ſo fit for the impreſſion at that time, that I made no objection or ſcruple at it. And having upon this call eſpouſed the good old cauſe (though I ſay it,) I have been true to it ever ſince, according to the ſeveral degrees of light which I have received. How conſtant I have been in frequenting public and private meetings; how much I have contemned the world, and laid out myſelf upon this account; nay, how much I have ſuffered for godlineſs in evil times, and in the ſharpeſt trials never ſhrunk; theſe things are not ſo fit for me to relate, as for ſome of my neighbours, that have been very well acquainted with them.

Dio. There are many which make fair ſhews, and yet have no ſound root of grace in them; in time of temptation they fall away: and I wiſh you to conſider what the Lord ſaith by the prophet, Ezek. xviii. 24. "When the righteous turneth "away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth "iniquity, and doth according to all the abomi"nations that the wicked man doth, ſhall he live? "All his righteouſneſs that he hath done, ſhall not "be mentioned; in his treſpaſs that he hath treſ"paſſed, and in his ſin that he hath ſinned, in "them ſhall he die."

Præ. Divines do conclude, from the freeneſs of God's grace, and the abſoluteneſs of his power, and the unchangeableneſs of his counſel, and the greatneſs of his wiſdom, that he will not ſuffer any of his elect[*] to miſcarry; and theſe are the pillars [†] I am taught to lean upon. "And, John x. 29. Chriſt plainly giveth us to underſtand, that his ſheep are in the hands of his Father, and that none is able to take them out of his hands: And accordingly St. Peter ſaith, 1 Pet. i. 5. that they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto ſalvation. Yet when we ſay that this faith cannot be loſt, we deliver it upon ſuppoſition of God's purpoſe to maintain them in that ſtate of grace, againſt all the powers of darkneſs; which purpoſe is manifeſt by his promiſe, [‡] *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall never depart away from me.*" As for that text which you alledge, it makes nothing to this purpoſe, as the profeſſors of Leyden [§] have learnedly obſerved, becauſe "it is not abſolutely affirmed in that place, that one truly juſtified may fall away; but what will become of him if he does; that ſo by this commination, the prophet may make thoſe cautious, who are running the race of righteouſneſs, and fright them from defection:" But he knew well enough their defection is impoſſible; for *the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*, Rom. xi. 29.

DIO. I muſt tell you from the prophet, That [‖] *the heart of man is deceitful above all things; who* (beſides God and himſelf) *can know it?* Common grace may carry a man far; but your frequent relapſing into ſin, is ground enough to queſtion your ſincerity; and if that be doubtful, ſo is your effectual calling and regeneration too: and 'till you be certain of this, you can (in an ordinary way) have no certainty of your election.

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[*] Syn Dor. cap. 1. art. 11. [†] Dr. Spurſti *ubi ſupra* p. 46. Dr. Twiſs, ibid. page 172. [‡] Jer. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xviii. 24.

[§] Cenſura in Confeſs. cap. 18. ad finem page 254.

[‖] Account of Perſever. p. 27.

PRÆ. Though there be a great affinity and likeneſs between the elect of God, and ſuch as are indued only with a temporary faith; yet the gift of prayer, whereby they can with boldneſs approach the throne of grace, and in all their needs cry Abba, Father*, this is vigorous in the elect only; and by the privilege of this gift, I am confident of my election. I ſuppoſe you do not think that the elect, when once regenerate, are forthwith impeccable; and for ſins of infirmity, which the regenerate man daily falls into, through inadvertency or negligence, they do not interrupt his ſtate of juſtification, nor cut off his hereditary right to the kingdom of heaven; as the Britiſh divines have determined at the Synod of Dort †.

DIO. The ſins you are reported to be guilty of, are too groſs to be called ſins of infirmity.

PRÆ. The divines of the Synod at Dort ‡, do put the ſins of regenerate perſons upon the account of their ignorance and infirmity; and there is good reaſon for it, becauſe they happen always upon God's deſtitution, and the withdrawing of his grace §: hereupon Dr. Damman, (one of the ſcribes of that Synod) ſaith, "That the regenerate cannot omit the performance of what is required of them, if God performs what he hath promiſed to them; and when God doth his part, we cannot omit our's."

DIO. I would adviſe you to conſider what the apoſtle ſaith, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. "Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God." And Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. "Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe; adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like; of which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God." Now I appeal to your own conſcience, whether you be not guilty of ſome of theſe ſins, which (you hear the apoſtle ſaith) exclude men from a portion in God's kingdom?

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* Juſt. l. iii. c. 2. Sect. 11. † De Art. 5. page 192. par. 2.

‡ See the Apol. for Tilen. p. 380, 381. § Ibid. p. 382.

PRÆ. I will not go about to juſtify myſelf * in all the particulars there mentioned by the apoſtle; but he puts variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, into the ſame catalogue; and ſaith, that theſe are of like force with the reſt, to exclude men out of the kingdom of heaven: and yet you heard even now the judgment of that painful divine Mr. Baxter, who affirms, That many in theſe times, whom we doubt not to be godly, are guilty of theſe things; and that a man may be often drunk, and often commit fornication, he knows not juſtly how often, and yet have true grace: And therefore leſt you ſhould villify and diſgrace the godly, you muſt not underſtand thoſe texts of the apoſtle, of the guilt of ſome particular ſins; but of their habituated ſtate and trade of life in a proſecution of all ſins.

DIO. I would not have your ſoul miſcarry; and therefore I muſt ſay with the apoſtle, Epheſ. v. 6. "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because

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* It is true the children of God may ſometimes be overtaken with ſome foul ſin, as David was, and they may continue in it too long, without bringing forth ſo clear and full evidence of repentance and ſatisfaction to the church of God as the condition of their ſin requires; and in this caſe they may be for a time, as trees in the winter. Dr. Twiſs, ib. p. 103.

cauſe of theſe things, cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience."

Præ. I pray good ſir, obſerve the expreſſions of the apoſtle; he ſaith, "Becauſe of theſe things, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of diſobedience [*]": he doth not ſay, becauſe of theſe things, the wrath of God cometh upon thoſe elect perſons, whom he hath accepted in the Beloved, and adopted into the number of his children; ſin hath not the ſame effect in them, as it hath in the children of wrath.

Dio. What! do you make the ſame fact, for nature, quality and ſubſtance, to be a little ſin in one man, and a grievous out-crying ſin in another?

Præ. So we are taught by our orthodox divines: "There is no ſin, whether againſt the firſt or ſecond table, except that one ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, but the elect may, and oftentimes do fall into it: but there is a great difference betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate; for though they commit the ſame ſins, yet the reaſon, mode and exit hereof, is far different: So ſay the Haſſian divines too, and thoſe of Embden. But what need we go ſo far for authority? We have Mr. Baxter, who is in the room of all; and he ſaith in the preface to his Grotian Religion (Sect. 18.) that the ſin of Peter, David, &c. was exceedingly, in regard of manner, ends, concomitants, &c. different from the like fact in a graceleſs man [†]: and to the like purpoſe (Sect. 20.) where he makes the uncharitable paſſages (as he calls them) in Mr. P's. very learned book, with his other failings, to be more heinous ſins, (though not materially) and of more dangerous conſequence, than the ſins of David and Peter.

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[*] Thoſe divines add, in the place now alledged, Not the guilt of any perſon whatever, (which is oppoſed to juſtification) but the guilt of unbelievers, not yet waſhed in the blood of Chriſt; nor guilt of any meaſure; but ſuch guilt, on account of which the wrath of God falleth on the guilty perſon. He who is once juſtified by a true faith, will never afterwards be found guilty in this degree.

[†] A few ſharp paſſages of exact truth, amount to a greater guilt in ſome men, than adultery, murder, perjury, the denial of Chriſt do in others, by Mr. Baxter's doctrine.

Dio. The Scripture ſaith, *There is no reſpect of perſons with God.*

Præ. That paſſage of Scripture (as often as it is repeated) muſt be underſtood in a reſtrained and limited ſenſe; for God looked upon all men in a parity of condition; they lay exactly levelled in a ſtate of equality, when he *elected* ſome to life, and *reprobated* the reſt to deſtruction. It was the naked entity and perſon only, not any quality that he reſpected in them, according to the Synod at Dort: And there is no ſin ſo ſmall*, but it brings damnation to theſe *reprobates*; and yet there is no ſin ſo great, that can bring damnation to thoſe *elect.*

Dio. The apoſtle tells you plainly, that *if you live after the fleſh, you ſhall die*, Rom. viii. 13.

Præ. It is very true, if you underſtand it of the unregenerate, who were never ſanctified; but for the regenerate, the divines at the Synod of Dort do conclude†, That although they fall into moſt foul and heinous ſins, that do directly waſte the conſcience; yet is the ſeed of regeneration, with all fundamental gifts, (without which the ſtate of regeneration cannot poſſibly conſiſt) preſerved ſafe and ſound in them: ſo that they have a ſaving faith, and the Holy Spirit, and God's ſpecial favour; inſomuch that their univerſal juſtification, ſtate of adoption, and right to the kingdom of heaven, do yet remain uncancelled, unviolated, and immoveable. The Synod, in their very canons‡, hath determined, "That the regenerate cannot commit *the ſin unto death*, or *againſt the*

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* See the Declar. of the Congregational Churches, cap. xv. n. 5.

† See the Apology for Tilenus, p. 86, 87.----Mr Baxter ſaith, Becauſe God's purpoſe is unchangeable, he will keep them from ſuch ſins as are inconſiſtent with habitual grace. In his preface to the Grot. Relig. Sect. xvi xviii.

‡ Chap. v. Art. 6.

Holy Ghoſt; ſo as to be altogether forſaken of God, and throw themſelves into everlaſting deſtruction." And the divines of Great-Britain* have obſerved, "That *their moſt grievous ſins* are ſo far from diſturbing the juſtification and adoption of the faithful, that practical divines eſpecially do reſolve, that God doth often permit ſuch ſins in them, that their juſtification and adoption may be the more confirmed to them"— And other *orthodox*† divines do make ſin a part of the means in order to the execution of the decree of election.

Dio. Sure the regenerate cannot live in any known ſin?

Præ. Then they cannot ſin againſt conſcience; which is falſe. Doth not the apoſtle profeſs‡, *What I do, I allow not?* He knew what he did §, though he could not approve of it. And this he doth not ſpeak (by a fiction of law) in the perſon of the *unregenerate*, as the Remonſtrants erroneouſly teach; but he ſpeaks it of *himſelf* (as all the followers of Mr. Calvin do maintin); and yet this apoſtle was regenerate, without all peradventure.

Dio. I am ſure God hath made a promiſe concerning the *regenerate* ‖, that *ſin ſhall not have dominion over them*.

Præ. "We muſt diſtinguiſh of theſe three things, (ſaith Diodati ¶, one of the Synod ſent from Geneva) the kingdom, the dwelling, and the oppoſition of ſin; the firſt is annihilated, and brought to nothing, in believers; the other two remain for their exerciſe and humiliation." And of that complaint of the apoſtle, *O wretched man that I am*, ver. 24. he ſaith— "It is an exclamation for his miſery of being under the bondage of ſin." When the apoſtle therefore ſaith—*Sin ſhall not have dominion over you*, the meaning is—Sin ſhall not have authority to deſtroy you; but it may have power to tyrannize over you: and then it is not ſo much your fault as your affliction.

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* See the Apology for Tilenus, p. 385.

† Mr. Norton: Orth. Evang p. 56.

‡ Rom. vii.

§ Indeed none ſin more againſt knowledge than the godly, when they do ſin. Mr. Baxter's Directions for Peace of Conſcience, p. 464. Edit. II.

‖ Rom. vi. 14.

¶ Annot. ad Rom. vii. 17.

DIO. But the apoſtle ſaith, in the ſame chapter, *Let not ſin reign in your mortal bodies, that you ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof*; for who thus commits ſin, is the ſervant of ſin; and ſuch a one is not, *at that time*, the ſervant of God: for Chriſt ſaith, *A man cannot ſerve two maſters*, which are ſo oppoſite as God and ſin are.

PRÆ. Sir, you are much deceived; Mr. David Dicſon* proves this, for the conſolation of the faithful, from the example of the apoſtle, Rom. vii. 25. *So then, with the mind, I myſelf ſerve the law of God; but with the fleſh, the law of ſin.* As if he had ſaid—Now (that for the conſolation of thoſe who bewail their ſins, I may ſummarily recollect what I have ſaid concerning myſelf) I profeſs I have not attained unto that meaſure of holineſs to which I aſpire; but, together with the reſt of the ſaints, I go on bewailing and ſtriving, under hope of deliverance; and, as it were, divided from myſelf, the ſpirit and the fleſh ſtriving between themſelves in me: with my mind indeed, or that part of me which is ſpiritual and renewed, I do with delight ſerve the law of God; but with the fleſh, or that part of me which is not renewed, as it were a captive brought under the yoke, I ſerve the law of ſin, or the prevailing inclination of corrupt nature.—To this I may add, that there is a great difference betwixt a ſin that is invited and eſpouſed, and ſo reigns by our free election and ſuffrage, and a ſin that gets poſſeſſion by God's efficacious permiſſion and order; he withdrawing his aſſiſtance, and our guards, to make way for it.

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* Adver. 25. cap. vii. ad Roman.

Dio. I pray have a care you do not forget yourſelf, and lay your ſins upon God; for to impute your faults to him is blaſphemy.

Præ. Sir, I ſhall take care to confine myſelf within the limits of ſuch expreſſions as are conſonant to ſound doctrine. What think you of the elders and meſſengers of the congregational churches? I hope their faith, being the Confeſſion of the Aſſembly double-refined, will paſs for current with you; and they declare (as the Aſſembly had done before them) "that God's determinate* counſel extendeth itſelf, even to the firſt fall, and all other ſins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permiſſion:" That *God ordained whatſoever comes to paſs*†, without exception: And Mr. Norton ſaith, that *God is the fore-determiner of the ſinfulneſs of the action, to his own glorious and bleſſed end*‡: And you may remember the words of Dr. Damman, that *when God doth perform his part, we cannot omit ours.*

Dio. Methinks you are departed from the ſubject of our diſcourſe; neither can I ſee to what end you alledge the former paſſages.

Præ. I follow the thread of our diſcourſe as evenly as I can; and theſe allegations are to let you underſtand, that the regenerate are not ſo much to be blamed for their omiſſions and lapſes, as you imagine: becauſe theſe fall out according to God's own will, and by his ſpecial order.

Dio. I know you may do more good than you do, and omit more evil than you omit, if you will; and through your default herein, you ſhew yourſelf very diſingenuous in grieving the good Spirit of God; and hereby you incur his diſpleaſure in a very high degree.

Præ. God's diſpleaſure, I know, is dreadful to ſuch as lie under the burden of it; but a *profeſſor* ought not to give himſelf ſo great a temptation as to fear it. This is the judgment of Mr. Caryl, Mr. Burroughs, Mr. Strong, Mr. Sprig, and Mr. Pritty*; for they have commended a book wherein I am taught thus: "In caſe you be at any time, by reaſon of the weakneſs of your faith, and ſtrength of your temptations drawn aſide, and prevailed with, to tranſgreſs any of Chriſt's commandments, beware you do not thereupon take occaſion to call Chriſt's love to you into queſtion; but believe as firmly that he loves you, as dearly as he did before you thus tranſgreſſed: for this is a certain truth, As no good in you, or done by you, did or can move Chriſt to love you the more; ſo no evil in you, or done by you, can move him to love you the leſs." To which purpoſe I conſider that he choſe me to ſalvation, when I was yet in my ſin; and if my ſin could not provoke his diſpleaſure againſt my perſon then, when I was without Chriſt; much leſs can it do ſo now, when he hath made me *accepted in the Beloved*†.

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* Chap. v. n. 4. † Chap. iii. n. 1. ‡ Orth. Evang. p. 63

Neither can the Spirit of God be grieved at my infirmities; and that upon this account; for a wiſe perſon will not be grieved, but either for omitting what he would have done, or for committing what he would have left undone. How then can the regenerate grieve God's Spirit? For as to every good act, he doth determine our will to that, and produce it by an irreſiſtible efficiency; and this being good, and according to his will, it cannot grieve him. As for every evil act, his determinate counſel extendeth itſelf to that too; and that not by a bare permiſſion only ‡; nor as the author of nature (that he may not be wanting to his charge of providence) affording ſuch a ſimultaneous concourſe as the nature of the ſecond cauſe requires, that it may uſe its natural liberty; but by way of predetermination; and a moſt efficacious decree *; ſo that, 1. He is the author of the act wholly. 2. He is the fore-determiner, orderer, and governor of the ſinfulneſs of the action, to his own glorious and bleſſed end, ſaith Mr. Norton. This therefore is according to his good pleaſure too, and how then can it be ſaid to grieve him? eſpecially ſeeing he hath his own glorious and bleſſed end in it, for which he fore-determines it. And every ſinful act being thus ordered and fore-determined, it is impoſſible a poor creature ſhould avoid it, and conſequently I can omit no more evil than I do omit; neither can I do any more good than I do: for the orthodox do conclude †, that every good act is immediately from God, and of his irreſiſtible production. If therefore I can do ſome good more than I do, I can do ſome good that is not immediately from God, nor of his irreſiſtible production, which they account abſurd. That I do all the good that God irreſiſtibly produceth in me, appears from hence, becauſe otherwiſe God ſhould irreſiſtibly produce ſomething which is not produced; and conſequently it ſhould be, and not be, and be reſiſtible, and irreſiſtible, which are plain contradictions. That this is no ſingular opinion, you may aſſure yourſelf from hence, that it is conſonant to the faith of the congregational churches ‡, who declare concerning believers, that "their ability to do good works, is not at all of themſelves, but wholly from the ſpirit of Chriſt; and that they may be enabled thereunto, beſides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the ſame holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleaſure."

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* Marrow of Modern Divinity, p. 201. Edit. 3.

† Epheſ. i. 6.

‡ Declar. of Congreg. Ch. *ut ſupra.*

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* Dr. Twiſs, ib. p. 88, 89, 90.

† We do require that God ſhould immediately and irreſiſtibly work all our good works in us; (and) we acknowledge this to be neceſſary unto every good act. Dr. Twiſs, *ubi ſupra*, p. 482.

‡ Chap. xvi. n. 3.

T Dio.

Dio. You would have cited the theſis entire, if it had been for your advantage, but it was not; for they add in the very next words, "Yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unleſs upon a ſpecial motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in ſtirring up the grace of God that is in them."

Præ. I omitted this clauſe, not only becauſe it was not to my purpoſe, but alſo becauſe I conceived it very abſurd, if not contradictory to the former words. For, 1. What doth that diligence in ſtirring up the grace of God in them ſignify? If it ſignifieth either to will, or to do; that (whichſoever it is) is not to be performed (as they declare) without an actual influence of the ſame holy Spirit; and then it is abſurd to ſay, they are bound to it without a ſpecial motion of the Spirit. For, 2. If they be bound to perform ſuch a duty, without a ſpecial motion of the Spirit; and yet are not enabled thereunto without an actual influence of the ſame holy Spirit (as they declare they are not) then are they (even in a covenant of grace too) bound to impoſſibilities; which is abſurd. And, 3. Why ought they to be diligent? For if an actual influence of the Spirit be required hereunto, then their diligence without it is impertinent, if not impoſſible; and when that actual influence of the Spirit is upon them, if it works irreſiſtibly (as the orthodox maintain it doth) then all diligence is utterly ſuperfluous unto ſuch an operation. And, 4. In this caſe Believers cannot be negligent; for neglect certainly is the pretermiſſion of ſome poſſible performance; which cannot have place here; for the good work cannot be performed without ſuch an actual influence? (therefore it is not poſſible without it) and with that actual influence it cannot be omitted; for that influence is irreſiſtible.

Dio. You ſeem to lay the ſin of the regenerate, upon God's deficiency in affording grace neceſſary to avoid it.

Præ. This is no more than what is done by our orthodox divines. Do they not conclude that he did withdraw from Adam * grace and light ſufficient unto his perſeverance? and ſo he doth when he pleaſes, from the regenerate too †; which is the reaſon of their ſeveral lapſes and failings: for as Mr. Baxter tells us (in his preface, ſect. 16.) the Synod of Dort ſays, That if you ſpeak of power in them, the regenerate cannot ſtand. And, that they are not always ſo led and moved by God, as to be preſerved from the ſeducements of concupiſcence; but by his juſt permiſſion are carried away into grievous and heinous ſins. It is by the power of God only that they ſtand; their ability is not at all of themſelves; and, beſides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the Spirit, and that irreſiſtible. When this power is withdrawn, they muſt needs fall; and therefore Dr. Damman (as was obſerved before) tells us, that when God doth his part, we cannot omit ours.

Dio. But God doth not withdraw his gracious aſſiſtance, but upon man's provocation, and neglect to co-operate with it.

Præ. Yes, God hath liberty to do it for his mere pleaſure, being tied by no law unto his creature. Thus he did by Adam in his ſtate of innocency; and he hath ſeveral good ends in it; his own glory, and their benefit; as the divines ‡ of Drent determined at the Synod of Dort. The Britiſh divines ſay (as you heard even now) that their

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* As was ſhewn in the firſt Dialogue.

† God may withdraw his grace, as he did from Peter and David in their ſin. Mr. Baxter's Directions for Peace of Conſcience, page 465. Edit. 2.

‡ See the Apology for Tilenus, page 385.

juſtification and adoption are thereby confirmed: and thoſe divines of Drent add further, that thoſe ſins which in the wicked have the nature of puniſhment, have in the faithful the nature of fatherly caſtigation.

DIO. But will they not be bitterneſs in the latter end, think you, as the prophet Jeremiah hath it? Chap. ii. 19.

PRÆ. To the unregenerate, to whom they are damnable, they muſt needs be ſo, but not to the elect; whoſe ſlips and failings, Mr. Perkins * tell us, are privileges annexed to their adoption and paternal caſtigations for their benefit: and as a remedy againſt doubting or deſperation of our election, and God's mercy, he preſcribes this meditation, amongſt others: "That ſin doth not take away grace, but illuſtrates, and makes it brighter." Now I hope you would not have a man to be in anguiſh and bitterneſs of ſpirit, for ſuffering chaſtiſement, which is derived to us as a ſpecial favour from God, a great teſtimony of the love of our heavenly Father: for what ſaith the apoſtle from Solomon, Heb. xii. 5, 6, 7, 8. 12. "My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth, he chaſteneth; and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth: If ye endure chaſtening, God dealeth with you as with ſons; for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not? But if ye be without chaſtiſement, whereof all are partakers, than are ye baſtards, and not ſons. Wherefore (ſaith the apoſtle) lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." The apoſtle turns it into an uſe of conſolation to the faithful.

DIO. Admit the ſlips and falls of the faithful be paternal caſtigations (according to the judgment of thoſe great divines) and ſo from God's ſpecial

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* In Armilla Aurea. cap. 37.

ſavour and providence (as all other paternal caſtigations are) yet the apoſtle ſaith, in the place alledged by you[*], that *no chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous*; and therefore you ought to be grieved, and to mourn upon this account.

PRÆ. The apoſtle, in thoſe words, tells you how chaſtiſement is uſually reſented, according to the judgment of the fleſh, as Mr. D. Dicſon doth expound it; and (as the learned Dr. Hammond paraphraſes the words) "It is true indeed, that there is in all affliction, that which is ungrateful to fleſh and blood." But ſuch as have made a farther progreſs in Chriſtianity, and are advanced to a higher ſtate of ſpirituality, they can *glory in tribulations*[†]; and if the apoſtles, *being beaten*[‡], could *rejoice that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame*, in that kind, *for Chriſt's name*; much more may they rejoice and glory in thoſe other paternal caſtigations, (their ſweet ſins) which are altogether agreeable to their ſenſual appetites.

DIO. The apoſtle ſaith, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14.

PRÆ. Is not the apoſtle's injunction for following peace with all men, as ſtrict as for following holineſs? Do you think this duty neceſſary to ſalvation too? But to pretermit that, I hope God's paternal caſtigations are not ſuch enemies to holineſs, but they may very well be reconciled, and dwell together.

2. Dr. Twiſs[§] tells us, that "the very children of God have ſavage luſts, and wild affections in them; (he takes the obſervation from David's prayer, Pſal. li. 10.) the curing and maſtering whereof, is no leſs work, than was the the work of creation, or making of the world." He ſaith alſo, that "after their effec-

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[*] Ver. 11. [†] Rom. v. 3. [‡] Acts v. 40, 41. [§] *Ubi ſupra*, p. 20.

tual calling, they have cauſe ſometimes to expoſtulate with God, for hardening their hearts againſt his fear."—Whatever you alledged before out of this doctor, as delivered in his paſſion; you ſee his judgment in cool blood: nay, Mr. Baxter* delivers it as the opinion of moſt of our divines, that a man that is unſanctified muſt be a greater ſinner than Solomon was.

3. " Our right and title to the kingdom of heaven, and conſequently to the viſion of God, is not derived from any actions of our own, or placed in them, or built upon them; but it is placed in a free adoption, and in our conjunction with Chriſt. And therefore our right unto the kingdom is not taken away, unleſs that be taken away wherein it is founded: *If ſons, then heirs; heirs of God, and coheirs with Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 17. *Manente ergo adoptione et in Chriſtum inſitione, extra viam regni aberrare poteſt fidelis, at jure regni hæreditatio excidere non poteſt:* Therefore the faithful, his adoption and ingrafting into Chriſt remaining, may wander out of the way of the kingdom; but he cannot loſe, or fall from, his hereditary right to it †." This is that which ſupported the death-bed faith of his late Highneſs, O. C. ‡ who ſpeaking (then) of the covenant, is reported to ſay—" Whatſoever ſins thou haſt, doſt, or ſhall commit; if thou lay hold upon free-grace, you are ſafe: but if you put yourſelf under a covenant of works, you bring yourſelf under the law, and ſo under the curſe; then you are gone." For holineſs therefore, (to appear before the preſence of God in) God will take care to put it upon us. The Elect (with that bleſſed apoſtle) deſire " to be found in Chriſt, not having on their

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* Of Right to Sacram. Diſp. 3. p. 326, 327.

† Thus the Britiſh divines at Dort.

‡ A Collection of ſeveral paſſages concerning his late Highneſs, O. C. in the time of his ſickneſs, p. 6.

own *(inherent)* righteouſneſs*; but that which is *(imputed)* through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9.

Dio. I am of that opinion, that the dominion of any one ſin is inconſiſtent with ſaving-grace and juſtification.

Præ. I am ſure St. Paul found it otherwiſe by experience, at leaſt, if our ableſt Calviniſts do rightly interpret him; for he ſaith, Rom. vii. 14. *I am carnal, ſold under ſin*; that is, (as Diodati † expounds it) "altogether ſubjected as a ſlave, bought for a certain price of money:" and he alledgeth to this purpoſe, 1 Kings xxi. 20. where it is ſaid of Ahab, *Thou haſt ſold thyſelf to work wickedneſs in the ſight of the Lord.* To whom agreeth Mr. D. Dicſon, upon the place, *Cogor meipſum carnalem agnoſcere*— "I am conſtrained to acknowledge myſelf carnal, and as a ſlave ſold, that I might be ſubject to ſin, out of whoſe fetters I cannot free myſelf, but am often carried whither I would not." This is acknowledged to be the apoſtle's condition; who doubtleſs was in the ſtate of grace and juſtification. —If by the dominion of ſin, you mean ſomething elſe; then I demand,

2. When may we conclude that ſin hath dominion over a man?—David, you know, after he had been wounded with the beauty of Bathſheba, he ſent meſſengers to court and woo her, for his entertainment; when ſhe was brought, he lay with her; after that he ſent for her huſband, to cloak his ſhame; but becauſe he could not tempt him by ſhews of pity, and other fair means, to go in unto her, he made him drunk, that in that diſtemper he might ſerve the ends of his luſt upon him: and becauſe

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* Renouncing all righteouſneſs in myſelf by the works of the law, and having only confidence in that which is by faith. Dicſon. ad Phil iii. 9.

† Ad locum.

this device would not take neither, he conſpired his death, and ſent an expreſs order to Joab to take ſpecial care to murder him, though many gallant men were expoſed to the ſlaughter, to bear him company. Notwithſtanding all this, our divines do conclude, that ſin had not dominion over David, (at that time); his ſtate of juſtification was not diſſolved or interrupted, and his adoption remained immoveable[†]; for ſuch as are once regenerated, ſin can never have dominion over them (to their condemnation); *they are not under the law*, (where ſin hath dominion to that effect) *but under grace* [‡]—*the Spirit* (which is given them at their new birth) *abides with them for ever* [§] — and *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*, 2 Cor. iii. 17.

DIO. "He that hath not more hatred than love to any ſin[‖]; and had not rather be rid of it, even in the uſe of God's means, than keep it, in regard of the habituated ſtate of his will, is under the dominion of ſin, and in a ſtate of damnation." Account of Perſever. *ubi ſupra.*

PRÆ. 1. Is this conſiſtent with ſuch a man as David, his having two contrary ultimate ends?

2. There is a combat betwixt the inward and the outward, the ſpiritual and the carnal, the new and the old man; which they only do underſtand who feel it in themſelves, and have experience of the power of ſin polluting, in ſome meaſure, their moſt holy actions, and ſpreading over the whole courſe of their lives; ſaith Mr. D. Dicſon[¶].

3. But ſuch as are under ſuch conflicts, you ſay, will uſe *God's means*, &c. What are *God's means*? Are they not his holy ordinances? He that doth diligently frequent theſe, that hears the word, and delights in religious conferences, and is conſtant at

[*] 2 Sam. xi. 15. 17. [†] Act. Syn. Nat. Dort. p. 194. par. 2.
[‡] Rom. vi. 14. [§] John xiv. 16. [‖] Mr. Baxter.
[¶] Ad Rom. vii. 22, 23.

his devotions and prayers, doth uſe God's means; and thus did David, ſaith Mr. Baxter *; [" I verily think that after his ſin, David went on in his ordinary courſe of religion and obedience in all things elſe (abating in the degrees;) and bleſſed be God, ſo do I; and this is evidence ſufficient of the habituated ſtate of the will."]

(4.) If a man cannot get rid of his ſins upon this account, at leaſt he may comfort himſelf (as to the event) that God ſends them for fatherly chaſtiſements, as Mr. Perkins ſpeaketh; and raiſe his ſoul up with this meditation, Sin ſerves rather to furbiſh our faith, and the divine grace in us, than to expel it. To this purpoſe Dr. Twiſs ſaith, " That all things work together for the good of them that love God, is as true as that the apoſtle Paul's Epiſtle to the Romans is the Word of God: And biſhop Cooper, a Scottiſh biſhop (ſaith he) applies this to men's ſins amongſt other things, ſhewing how they alſo do work for a man's good." And in another place ſpeaking of himſelf, the Doctor hath theſe words: " I take notice of God's hand ſometimes hardening me againſt his fear, yet God knows I take no comfort in it, but rather in this, that God knows how to work it for my good; according to that of Auſtin: " And when I find that my ſins do not make a final or a total ſeparation between my ſoul and God, this may well tend to the corroboration of my faith, and perſuade my ſoul that nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord; and I have good cauſe to take comfort in this," ſaith that learned Doctor.

(5.) But ſuppoſe a man ſhould feel ſome pleaſure in the act of ſin, as to the fleſh, and outward man; yet he hath no need to fear the dominion of ſin, or ſtate of damnation †, if he carries a hatred

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* Pref. to the Grot. Relig. Sect. 19.

† Mr. Baxter ſaith, that David choſe fleſh-pleaſing for itſelf, as his ultimate end. On Saving Faith, *ubi ſupra*.

towards it in his ſpirit, and inward man; for this is exactly the caſe of the regenerate, if you will allow (with our divines) that the apoſtle ſpeaketh for their comfort, no otherwiſe then as he found by experience in his own perſon, Rom. vii. 14, &c. "I am carnal (ſaith he) ſold under ſin: for that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I;" (which he would not have done, had he not found ſome pleaſure in it:) "If then I do that which I would not, I conſent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me; for I know that in me, (that is, in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is preſent with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not; for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me." From which diſcourſe of the apoſtle, Mr. D. Dicſon [*] draws ſeveral arguments of conſolation. From the 16th *verſe* (he ſaith) the apoſtle comforts himſelf, and other combatants with theſe arguments.

Firſt, I myſelf, an apoſtle, am in the number of thoſe who bewail the imperfection of their holineſs [†]; and feel in myſelf the ſame combat and trouble with them, from the imperfection of my obedience; therefore ſuch as bewail the imperfection of their holineſs, have conſolation, ſeeing they ſuffer nothing but what other ſaints, yea, and the apoſtles themſelves are ſubject unto.

A ſecond argument of conſolation is this; That out of this conflict there ariſeth a ſign of ſanctification begun in ſuch a combatant; and a conſent to the law of God, that it is good and holy: for if I do what I would not, then I conſent to the law of God that it is good: "And all that bewail the imperfection of their obedience, have the ſame ſign of their ſanctification."

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[*] *Ad locum.*

[†] Lactantius brings in a perſon thus excuſing himſelf. "I would not really willingly ſin, but I am overcome, for I am cloathed with weak and frail fleſh; and it is this that luſts; it is this that is wrathful; it is this that grieves; it is this that is afraid to die: therefore, I am led away involuntarily; and ſin, not becauſe I will, but becauſe I am forced."

A third argument of conſolation to all ſuch Chriſtian combatants, he draws from *ver*. 17. 20. in that the ſin which they commit, who do thus bewail their imperfection, and diſallow of it, and condemn it, ſhall not be imputed unto them, but to the corruption of their nature, and to that habitual ſin that dwells in them, &c. Thus Mr. Dicſon.

Thus it was in the falls of David and Peter. That David hated ſin habitually (and ſo may other ſinners do as well as he) for all his adultery and murder, we may conclude from his indignation againſt the oppreſſor, expreſſed at the hearing of Nathan's parable *: Hereupon you know how favourably ſome of our godly reforming divines have declared their judgment: "It is not imaginable (ſaith one † of them) that this ſudden prevalency of ſenſuality did ſo far change the judgment of David or Peter, that hereupon they habitually eſteemed the creature above God, and valued the pleaſures of ſin before the pleaſing and the favour of God. It is true, that actually in the time of ſinning, the power of ſenſuality prevailed againſt the act of charity; and ſo it doth in every ſin that men commit, according to the meaſure of the ſin: but that habitually God was afterward ſet leſs by than the ſenſual pleaſure by theſe holy men, is utterly improbable." Thus that author ‡.

DIO. That author tells you elſewhere, "He that is thus reſolved and affected againſt a groſs ſin, or any known ſin, that is under the power of his will, is not like to live in, or give up himſelf to it." [Account of Perſever. p. 40.]

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* 2 Sam. xii. 5. † Mr. Baxter, in his Pref. to the Grot. Relig. ſect. 19. ‡ Mr. Baxter.

Præ. That was well put in, [ſin, that is under the power of his will,] but is it as well under the power of the regenerate man's will, to avoid, as to commit ſin? No [*], it is not; and therefore, though he be reſolved and affected (with hatred) againſt it, yet he may live in it.

But, 2. In this caſe the regenerate is never ſaid to give himſelf up to ſin, but to be carried captive by it, and (as ſlaves [†] were among the Romans) to be ſold under it: Doth not that excellent veſſel of election acknowledge as much? Rom. vii. 22, 23. " For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing [‡] me into captivity to the law of ſin which is in my members." And *ver.* 14. he ſaith, " I am carnal, ſold under ſin," and yet at that very inſtant he triumphs in his deliverance through Jeſus Chriſt.

Dio. That author afore-mentioned, addeth in the ſame place, That he who is thus affected againſt ſin, cannot commit it without renewed reſolutions againſt it, and a reſtleſs importunity of ſoul to be delivered, which will prevail.

Præ. What you mean by a reſtleſs importunity of ſoul, I do not well underſtand; I find no ſuch reſtleſs importunity of ſoul in David after his murder and adultery, unleſs it were a reſtleſs importunity of ſoul, to get full poſſeſſion of the fair woman into his bed and boſom. I grant the regenerate, when they ſin, do often reſolve againſt it, and pray againſt it, as the apoſtle did againſt that thorn in the fleſh, which was a meſſenger of Satan, ſent to buffet him: But when they ſee it is not God's pleaſure to remove it, I ſuppoſe it is their duty to bear it with equanimity, as a part of God's fatherly chaſtiſement for their good; and to comfort themſelves with that oracle of the Lord to the ſaid apoſtle, "My grace is ſufficient for thee" to ſuſtain thee in thy conflict, and cleanſe thee from all ſuch pollutions as thou doſt contract in it, as Mr. D. Dicſon expounds it. And in this ſenſe, and to this purpoſe it is true, the regenerate by their renewed reſolutions and importunity, ſhall prevail: But if you mean a prevailing ſo far forth as to be freed from the captivity of ſin, you may be deceived; for you know not how long it will be, ere they ſhall prevail to this purpoſe. It is judged by divines, that David lay a twelve-month in his ſin of adultery and murder unrepented of: How long Aſa or Solomon ſinned, we know not: Nor can any man poſſibly determine juſt how long a man may live in the practice of ſuch a ſin, and yet have true ſpecial grace, and a ſtate of juſtification, ſaith Mr. Baxter in his Diſpute of Right to Sacraments, Diſp. 3. page 331, and page 337. He ſaith, it is exceeding hard to determine how great, many, or long, the ſins of a true believer may be.

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[*] O wretched man! (Diodati tells us) is an exclamation out of the feeling of this miſery; i. e. of being yet under the bondage of ſin. Annot. on Rom. vii. 24.

[†] Altogether ſubiected as a ſlave bought for a certain price of money, Diodati. Annot. ad Rom. vii. 14.

[‡] Cauſeth me to be inevitably driven into ſin. Diodati. Annot. *ad locum.*

DIO. God we are ſure is faithful, and will not ſuffer his children to be tempted above that they are able: 1 Cor. x. 13.

PRÆ. I conceive, Sir, that is ſpoken of their perſecutions; but yet we ſee God ſuffers ſome of his children to be tempted in that kind, even unto * death; and that is the only way he vouchſafes them

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* Was God ever the leſs faithful to David, for permitting him to fall into adultery and murder? Will you blame his fidelity, when he leaves his children to be chaſtiſed by their own infirmities?

them to eſcape by: Rev. vi. 9. "They were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held." And under paternal caſtigations of another nature, we ſee there are many whom God is pleaſed ſhould die of the remedy, and yet are happy, 1 Cor. xi. 30, 31. "For this cauſe many are ſick and weak amongſt you, and many fall aſleep." — But when we are (thus) judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world. Seeing then that the ſlips and falls of the regenerate, are, by the orthodox, accounted to be of the ſame nature, and fatherly chaſtiſements too; why may not Almighty God, to advance his own free-grace and pardon, ſuffer his children to be held captive under theſe infirmities, and afford them no way but death, to eſcape from them?

Dio. You may remember, the author of thoſe Diſputations of Right to Sacraments (as I told you at the beginning of our diſcourſe) hath obſerved, that our divines at Dort conclude, That though a godly man loſe not his juſtification by groſs ſinning, yet he contracts ſuch an incapacity of coming to heaven in that ſtate, that muſt be removed by repentance, or elſe he could not be ſaved. Hereupon that Synod hath determined, That in theſe ſlips, God preſerveth in them that his immortal ſeed (by which they were once born again) that it die not, nor be loſt by them; afterward by his word and ſpirit, he effectually and certainly reneweth them again unto repentance.

Præ. If God preſerves that immortal ſeed in them, and doth effectually and certainly renew them again unto repentance, then they may caſt away all care; for they are in no danger of miſcarrying: Though they fall into grievous ſins, whereby they impair their graces, and harden their hearts, and wound their conſciences, hurt and ſcandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themſelves; yet they are, and ſhall be kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation. This is the faith of the congregational churches [*]; and the aſſembly of divines [†] do ſuppoſe, That amongſt the temporal judgments which they may bring upon themſelves, death may be one, as appears by their quoting that Scripture example, 1 Cor. xi. 30. 32.

Dio. Suppoſe then that this judgment of death ſhould come ſuddenly, and ſurprize ſuch a man in his ſin, before the renewing of his repentance, to remove that preſent incapacity of ſalvation which he hath contracted, what a ſad caſe were he in!

Præ. Sir, you are much deceived; for either it is impoſſible he ſhould die without ſuch a renewing of repentance (which if it be neceſſary, God will effectually and certainly work in him) or if God cuts him off without it, it will be to his advantage. This is the judgment of our often mentioned [‡] author. "If you can prove it profitable for ſuch a man to be ſuddenly cut off before repentance, and that ſuch a thing will be; I ſhould incline (ſaith he) to think that he would be fully pardoned at the inſtant of death, and ſo ſaved." Indeed if it were not ſo, what would become of thoſe that we doubt not to be godly (as Mr. Baxter ſpeaketh) who are guilty of diſobedience to their guides, and of ſchiſm, and doing much to the hurt of the church? A very great ſin (as he confeſſes [§]) yet we ſee, they are ſo far from repenting of their ſchiſm, and returning to their obedience, that they take all advantages to purſue the contrary; which certainly they would not do, if they were not taught to believe they are in no danger for want of repentance.

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[*] Declar. c. xvii. n. 3.

[†] In their Confeſſion of Faith. chap xvii. n. 3.

[‡] Mr. Baxter, at the end of his third Diſput. of Juſtificat. p. 398.

[§] Mr. Baxter, on Right to Sacram. diſput. 3. p. 29, 30.

tance. Reſtitution hath been eagerly preſſed to by many, yet who makes any conſcience to perform it ?

This confirms my belief, and I thank God I can triumph in it: "For I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord *".

But Sir, time calls me away ; I pray therefore let me know your reſolution concerning the baptizing of my child.

Dio. I deſire a little time to conſider of it, and then you ſhall have my final anſwer.

Præ. I ſhall ſend once more to know your reſolution. For my ſpiritual condition, which you ſo uncharitably ſcruple at, I doubt not is as good as yours ; "For I know whom I have believed, and he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, againſt the great † day." And ſo, Sir, I take my leave of you.

THE SYLLOGISM.

THAT doctrine that is not apt to bring the preſumptuous to repentance, but tends rather to confirm than humble them in their preſumption, that is a doctrine not according to godlineſs.

The doctrine maintained by the Calviniſts, in oppoſition to the Remonſtrants, is not apt to bring the preſumptuous to repentance, but tends rather to confirm than humble them in their preſumption. Therefore,

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* Rom. viii. 38, 39.

† 2 Tim. i. 12.

The doctrine maintained by the Calviniſts, in oppoſition to the Remonſtrants, is a doctrine not according to godlineſs.

The Major is evident of itſelf.

The Minor is proved by this dialogue.

COLASTERION.

JER. xxiii. 14.

I have ſeen in the prophets an horrible thing; they ſtrengthen the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedneſs.

OTHER PROOFS OF THE MINOR.

THE faithful, frequently and horribly, pollute themſelves with ſin, againſt God and his law: Every now and then they are drawn away into idolatry, ſuperſtition, falſe doctrine, hereſy, debates, denial of Chriſt, ſecurity, unbelief, looſe living, pride, rebellion, murder, adultery, treachery, and other like evils: yet nevertheleſs, we believe, and are perſuaded notwithſtanding, that theſe ſhall never be *totally* cut off; nor can poſſibly be excluded from God's fatherly love and favour.—Smoutius, in his Paternoſter.

No faithful men, through any ſins, can poſſibly fall, finally, from the grace of God.—S. Damman, ſcribe of the Synod of Dort.

The faithful are ſometimes carried away by the devil, the world and the fleſh, into the moſt grievous and attrocious ſins; whereby they greatly offend God, are guilty of death, grieve the Holy Spirit, interrupt the exerciſe of faith, and grievouſly wound their conſciences: nevertheleſs, God does not wholly take his ſpirit from them, nor ſuffer them ſo totally to depart, as that they ſhall be cut off from a ſtate of adoption and juſtification, or commit the ſin unto death.—Synod of Dort. Of the Perſeverance of the Saints. Art. 4, 5, 6.

END OF THE FOURTH DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE V.

CALVINISM A SCOURGE TO THE DISCONSOLATE, AND AN ARREST OF COMFORT.

The aſſertions at the head are proved in the Dialogues from the very fundamentals of Calviniſm, or from the works of Calvin, and the other great and learned Calviniſts who broached and eſtabliſhed his doctrines in Europe.

DIOTREPHES AND SAMARITANUS.

DIOTREPHES. SIR, what is your buſineſs with me, that you come ſo unſeaſonably, at a time when you know I uſually ſequeſter myſelf from all converſation?

SAMARITANUS. Sir, the trouble I do now take the boldneſs to give you, is in the behalf of my dear friend *Deſolatus*, a poor diſconſolate ſoul, God knows, that hath for ſome time lain a bleeding under the ſenſe of thoſe wounds which (as he complains) his ſins have inflicted upon his conſcience, and gaſping after comfort.

DIO. It can be no trouble to me to be invited out upon ſuch occaſions; and I muſt tell you, I am not ſorry to hear him fallen into this diſtemper; for until men grow ſenſible of their diſeaſe, they think not of the phyſician; at leaſt, they will not value his preſcriptions; which made our Saviour ſay unto the Scribes and Phariſees *, "The whole have no need of a phyſician, but the ſick; and I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance." And what ſinners were they, think you, but ſuch as found themſelves weary and heavy laden; nay, loſt, and at the very point of periſhing? And therefore, altering his phraſe, though he ſpeaks of perſons under the ſame qualification, he ſaith, "The Son of man came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt *." It is no diſcouragement to me, but rather an invitation and inducement to miniſter to the needs of his ſoul. God himſelf hath profeſſed, he delights to dwell no where ſooner than in the poor and empty receptacles of an "humble and broken heart †." "A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe ‡." But, Sir, that I may gain a little better notice of his condition, give me leave to enquire further after him. I am confident your charity, that brought you thus far to me on his behalf, did alſo prompt you to ſuggeſt ſuch wholeſome directions as you thought moſt ſuitable to his capacity, in reference to the temptations he lies under.

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* Matth. ix. 12, 13.

SAMAR. Sir, had my abilities been anſwerable to my compaſſion, my applications for his recovery out of this ſad ſtate, might have been much more effectual than they were: But you may aſſure yourſelf, his wounds were dreſſed with the beſt wine and oil my ſtock afforded.

DIO. You are ſo well principled in general, and eſpecially ſo well verſed in caſes of conſcience, and the practical part of Chriſtianity, that you are able to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon: But ſeeing, as I conceive, he lies under the arreſt of the ſpirit of bondage, it may be a queſtion, whether it be yet ſeaſonable or convenient to give him bail. Humiliation is the ground-work of converſion; and the deeper the foundation is digged, the ſtronger will be the building that is erected upon it. None are conducted to heaven with more aſſurance than they that have paſſed by the gates of hell; and the longer he ſtands at thoſe gates, the greater will be

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* Matth. xviii. 11. † Iſa. lvii. 15. and lxvii. 2. ‡ Pſal. li 17.

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his affrightment from the ways that lead thither; and the greater his thirſt after the joys of heaven, when they are offered to ſolicit him into the ways of righteouſneſs. If it be upon the ſurpriſal of ſome late waſting ſin, or the reflection upon former foul crimes, that this preſent tempeſt is raiſed in his conſcience, let him be toſſed a while, until he takes in a little more ſalt water, and become more ſea-ſick; that being tumultuated in the hurry of his own diſtracted thoughts, he may be driven to act the phyſician's part upon himſelf; or with thoſe mariners, to caſt lots to find out the criminal, in whoſe proſecution that ſtorm was ſent out by the Divine diſpleaſure; that ſo Jonah being thrown over-board, the wind and ſea may be becalmed, and the paſſage made ſecure for the time enſuing. It is fit the law ſhould lay on her full load upon foul ſinners, until their ſhoulders be wrung and pinched, and force them to cry out. It is the ſeverity of that uſher that makes men willing to ſubmit to the diſcipline of Jeſus Chriſt.

Samar. I am not ſatisfied that this is the beſt method for the cure of *Deſolatus*; gentler applications may be more proper to rectify and ſettle the humours that are ſtirred in him. It is not a draught of deadly poiſon lately ſwallowed, that has brought theſe fits upon him; nor the freſh apparition of long buried crimes, newly raiſed up from the dead, by the power of an eſpecial providence (though it is moſt certainly true, and verified in his complaints, that every little ſin will fall a buffetting the conſcience, when it is too weak and feeble to make reſiſtance, yet) I ſay, it is no ſuch horrid ſpectre of guilt: but on a ſudden, he ſinks in his hopes, and is at a loſs for his aſſurance, and doubts his ſincerity, and conſequently his intereſt in the merits of Chriſt, and in God's love and favour. And the temptation, heightened by the ſubtilty of the tempter, taking advantage of his own fears and jealouſies, is grown ſo ſtrong and violent, that he is hardly perſuaded to the patience to have it undermined or oppoſed. And I perceive it is the apoſtacy of theſe preſent times that hath given him this ſcandal, and betrayed him to that diſſatisfaction that afflicts him.

DIO. Why, what doth he infer from theſe ſad emergencies of Providence?

SAMAR. He makes ſad reflections upon them, and then applies them to his own diſcouragement; inſomuch, that whereas he was wont formerly to diſcourſe of the doctrine of the certain perſeverance of all the ſanctified, with much feeling and conſolation, ſaying, "It was to his ſpirits as a well of water ſpringing up to everlaſting life:" Now, on the other ſide, (having ſuch examples before his eyes) he apprehends the ſame doctrine as the waters of Marah; he can find nothing but matter of ſtrife, and reliſh nothing but a taſte of bitterneſs in it: "*For (ſaith he) if I could have any aſſurance that I am truly ſanctified, the doctrine of certain perſeverance of all ſuch, would be comfortable to me; but I am brought now into ſuch doubts of it, that I fear I ſhall never attain to ſuch aſſurance, being rather induced to conclude myſelf certainly unſanctified: For I never reached ſo high, as ſome that I have known that have fallen away. I have known divers that have been judicious and affectionate, and conſtant, and lively in duty, and of very upright, careful lives, and ſo great contemners of the world, that they would not have omitted an opportunity for their ſouls, for worldly gain; yea, they were perſecuted, and ſuffered very much for godlineſs in evil times, and in the ſharpeſt trials never ſhrunk, when others did; and laid out themſelves altogether in doing good. Their prayers

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* Mr. Baxter's Account of Perſev. p. 25, 26.

and conferences were very holy and heavenly, and affectionate, and their lives agreeable; ſo that they were incomparably beyond me in all theſe qualifications*; and yet ſome of them now do deny the Godhead of Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt; ſome deny the Scripture, and that there is any church or miniſtry; ſome are turned Quakers, and ſome licentious, if not infidels; and therefore certainly have now no ſaving grace. Now, before I can ever be ſure that I am juſtified, I muſt be ſure that I go further than any of theſe did, or any other that ever fell away; whereas I find myſelf far ſhort of many of them. And I am in a manner certain, that ſome of them did not diſſemble; both by my obſervation of their whole courſe, being intimately acquainted with them, and by the plainneſs and openneſs of ſome of their hearts, which they manifeſt even to this day, in the way that they are in, being unapt for diſſimulation."—This, Sir, is the ground of his dejection.

Dio. And, I pray, what antidotes have you given him againſt theſe infuſions?

Samar. I have fortified him as prudently as I could, by theſe apoſtolical counſels.

1. To be wiſe unto ſobriety, and not to lean too much to his own underſtanding.

2. I have added that of St. John†—"Beloved, believe not every ſpirit, but try the ſpirits whether they are of God; becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world." And that of St. Peter‡, "Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing ye know theſe things before, beware leſt ye alſo being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs:

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* One would have thought it next to an impoſſibility, that ſuch men (the higheſt profeſſors of religion) and ſo many of them, could ever have been drawn to do that againſt the Church, againſt that goſpel-miniſtry, and ordinances of God, (which once ſeemed dearer to them than their lives) which hath ſince been done, and which yet we fear!---Mr. Baxter's Directions for Peace of Conſcience, in the Epiſtle to the poor in Spirit.

† 1 John iv. 1.

‡ 2 Pet. iii. 17.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." And that of St. Paul*—"Now I beſeech you brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: for they that are ſuch, ſerve not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own belly; and by good words, and fair ſpeeches, deceive the hearts of the ſimple." I have adviſed him further:——

3. "As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, ſo walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and eſtabliſhed in the faith, as ye have been taught†." To which end I have commended to him that of the author to the Hebrews ‡—"Remember them which are the guides, that have the rule over you, who have ſpoken to you the word of God, whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation. Obey them, and ſubmit yourſelves; for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account." And—"§ Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together:" But "‖ building up ourſelves on our moſt holy faith, (which was once delivered unto the ſaints) praying in the Holy Ghoſt, and (by this means) keep ourſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life." And to take off the ſcandal, I have wiſhed him to remember that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath foretold how much the temptations of the world and fleſh would prevail upon the hearts of many profeſſors; and that falſe prophets and factious teachers ſhould ariſe, and *draw many diſciples after them*; and, by their fair ſhews and ſpecious pretences, ſhould *deceive, if it were poſſible, the very elect*. If he obſerved theſe predictions, and followed theſe rules, I told him I was very

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* Rom. xvi 17, 18. † Col. ii. 6, 7. ‡ Heb. xiii. 7.
§ Heb. x. 23, 25. ‖ Ep. Jude, *ver.* 4. 30. 21.

well aſſured he ſhould find ſuch aſſiſtance and eſtabliſhment, as might encourage him to ſay with the apoſtle—"*We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul."

Dio. Your advice was good and ſeaſonable, had you forborn your inſinuation, that the *old way* is the ſafeſt to be inſiſted on; for that may hinder, or at leaſt retard the intended reformation. But what ſatisfaction did he find in your diſcourſe?

Samar. He harped much upon that paſſage—"They ſhould deceive (if it were poſſible) the very *elect.*" Aye, the *elect,* ſaith he: they are the only men that ſhall be preſerved from ſeduction; for they have a ſpecial *differencing* grace conferred upon them, by an irreſiſtible operation: and that is reſerved to them by the ſame omnipotent ſtrength that did at firſt infuſe it. I demanded of him, Why he might not aſſure himſelf of ſuch a grace? His anſwer was—That ſeeing many great and zealous profeſſors, whoſe virtues were far more eminent than any he could or durſt pretend to, have fallen ſo low, that their condition was reputed hopeleſs; this made him more carefully to bring his grace unto the teſt and balance, to exame it; and if true, yet he muſt conclude it many grains and ſcruples too light: and this (ſaith he) begets ſo great a jealouſy of mine own ſincerity. If thoſe (ſaith he) whom I have looked upon as ſtars of the firſt magnitude, have made all that luſtre by the emiſſions and beams of common grace, which God, in the decree of Reprobation, hath aſſociated with the efficacious permiſſion of ſin, to make up one perfect medium, to carry that decree to its final execution in them; what preſumption were it in me, to think that *that* grace in me is of a higher pitch or nobler extraction? And if it be not, what is become of that certain perſeverance, which I have thus long claimed a title to?"—Thus the miſerable *Deſolatus* divides his time betwixt his complaints and doubts; and thinks there is no balm ſo ſovereign as to heal his bruiſes.

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* Heb. x. 39.

DIO. Have you applied no ſalve to this ſore in him?

SAMAR. Yes; 1. I have expoſtulated with him to this purpoſe:—" * Muſt the Lord ſet up love and mercy in the work of redemption, to be equally admired with his omnipotency manifeſted in the creation? and call forth the world to this ſweet employment, that in ſecret, and in public, it might be the buſineſs of our lives? And yet ſhall it be ſo overlooked or queſtioned, as if you lived without love and mercy in the world? Providence doth its part, by heaping up mountains of daily mercies, and theſe it ſets before your eyes. The goſpel hath eminently done its part, by clearly deſcribing them, and fully aſſuring them; and this is proclaimed frequently in your ears, and yet is there ſo little in your hearts and mouths! Do you ſee and hear, and feel, and taſte mercy and love? Do you live wholly on it, and yet do you ſtill doubt of it, and think ſo meanly of it, and ſo hardly acknowledge it?"

To this he anſwers:—" That for God's *general* mercy, (which concerns not the life to come) he readily acknowledgeth it over all his works; but for his *ſaving* mercy, that is reſtrained to a certain number, whom he hath choſen to glory, without reſpect to any qualification in them:" And this Dr. Twiſs † concludes from thoſe words of the apoſtle—*He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy* ‡: for the reſt, he hardens them; and that for the mere pleaſure of his will.

2. I have repreſented to him the advice of St. James §—" If any of you (mark, *any of you*) do lack

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* Mr. Baxter's Directions for Peace of Conſcience, in his Epiſtle to the Poor in Spirit.

† *Ubi ſupra*, p. 51. ‡ Rom. ix. 15. § Mr. Baxter, ib. p. 39, 40.

wiſdom, let him aſk it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, *(without deſert)* and upbraideth not, *(with our unworthineſs or former faults)*; and it ſhall be given him:" James i. 5. "If you that are evil can give good gifts to your children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them that aſk it?" Luke xi. 13. "Suppoſe your life were in the hands of your own huſband, or your children's life in your hands, would it not exceedingly comfort you or them, to conſider whoſe hands they are in, though you had no further aſſurance how you ſhould be uſed? God is a Father, even to the wicked; and to convince men of his fatherly mercy to them, he often ſo ſtileth himſelf: He ſaith by Moſes, Deut. xxxii. 6. to a wicked generation, whoſe ſpot was not the ſpot of his children—*Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people, and unwiſe? Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and eſtabliſhed thee?* And the Prodigal could call him *Father*, for his encouragement, before he returned to him, Luke xv. 17, 18, 19. For my own part, I muſt needs profeſs, that my ſoul hath more frequent ſupport from the conſideration of God's gracious and merciful nature, than from the promiſe itſelf."

To this he returns a ready anſwer—"That God is the Father of all creatures, as he is their Maker: Eph. iii. 14, 15. But if we ſpeak with reference to ſalvation, Dr. Twiſs * ſaith—The dealing of God is with his children (he means the elect) only fatherlike; not with others."

3. I have ſignified to him—That this diſquietneſs (in him) doth manifeſtly argue a deſire to believe (as Dr. Twiſs † obſerves) and God hath promiſed to fulfil the deſire of them that fear him.—"And ſeeing affliction, eſpecially when it is of a ſpiritual nature, is the ordinary introduction into the

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* *Ubi ſupra*, p. 53. † Ibid. p. 138.

ſtate of grace, in the courſe of God's providence, like as the Valley of Achor was a door of hope to the children of Iſrael; and our Saviour, in going to Jeruſalem, (the viſion of peace) did continually take Bethany (the houſe of mourning) in his way: We have reaſon to conceive good hope, that theſe pangs may be as the pangs of child-birth unto an afflicted ſoul.

To this he replies—"*That *common* grace will carry a man ſo far as to be abaſed in the feeling of his ſin and miſery, and to be humbled by attrition, (as the Papiſts call it) and to cry out of their ſin and folly, and day and night to beg for grace and mercy. He may like the word and ways of God, and think God's ſervants the beſt and happieſt men, and have many a wiſh that he were ſuch himſelf: He may avoid groſs and wilful ſinning, and continue in hearing, reading the word, enquiring, and conſideration; he may have a deſire after Chriſt and holineſs, and heaven; he may have love to God and the Redeemer, and the ſaints; and withal, he may have either a knowledge that he is yet ſhort of true Chriſtianity, or, at leaſt, be much afraid of it; and therefore be under a prudent impatiency, 'till ſaving grace comes in, and the Spirit hath ſealed him up to the day of Redemption, and he cry out, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?*" This a man may be brought unto by *common* grace, which hath no promiſe of *ſaving* grace made to it, nor any neceſſary connection with it; and conſequently, (ſaith he) theſe pangs may be but the beginning of greater ſorrows.

4. I have aſſured him, that "if he doth believe in Chriſt, a fountain of conſolation is then opened to him†. In this caſe we can aſſure him, not only of the favour of God for the preſent, but alſo of final

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* Mr. Baxter on Saving Faith, p. 43, 44. † Dr. Twiſs, p. 148.

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perſeverence therein, and of election, and of ſalvation, as Dr. Twiſs* affirmeth.

To this he replies, in the words of the ſame Doctor†—"That a man may believe by an *acquired* faith‡, and perform the acts of all moral virtues, and have an exterior conformity to the means of grace, and ſo go on to the outward amendment of life, and yet not be acceptable to God, for all this! Nothing but a *divine* faith will ſave us."

5. I have told him—"Albeit he hath not this faith to-day, notwithſtanding he may have it in good time§; and that there is no cauſe of deſperation, or to conceive himſelf to be a reprobate‖, foraſmuch as his condition is no worſe than Saul's was before his calling; yea, and the holieſt ſervant of God¶. Therefore, (ſaid I) what if you have no grace? Do you not hear God daily offering you Chriſt and grace? Doth he not intreat and beſeech you to be reconciled unto him? 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. And would he not compel you to come in? St. Luke xiv. 23. Do you not feel ſome unquietneſs in your ſinful condition, and ſome motions and ſtrivings at your heart to get out of it? Certainly, though you ſhould be one that hath yet no grace to ſalvation; yet theſe continued offers of grace, and ſtrivings of the Spirit of Chriſt with your heart, do ſhew that God hath not quite forſaken you; and that your day of grace and viſitation is not yet paſt."

To this he finds an anſwer; and tells me—"The queſtion is, whether there be any ſuch day of viſitation allotted him, or no. He is ſure thoſe ſtrivings betwixt the fleſh and natural conſcience, portend no ſuch; foraſmuch as there may be ſuch a

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[*] Dr. Twiſs, p. 150.

[†] Ib. p. 47, 48.

[‡] How can ſuch a faith, clothed with all moral virtues, be diſtinguiſhed from an infuſed faith?

[§] Dr. Twiſs, ib. 150.

[‖] Ib. 138.

[¶] Mr. Baxter's Directions for Peace of Conſcience, p. 463.

conflict in the very reprobate. He wonders I ſhould ſay, that God doth beſeech him to be reconciled, and would compel him to come in; for his converſion muſt be (if ever it be at all) of God's irreſiſtible working, and ſaving grace of his immediate infuſing; and he being omnipotent, if he were pleaſed to have it ſo, it muſt needs be accompliſhed in him preſently.

6. I have intreated him after this manner:—"When the devil clamours in your ears* *Chriſt and ſalvation is none of thine*; let that voice of God be in your memory, *O take Chriſt and life in him, that thou mayeſt be ſaved!* When you would fain have Chriſt and life, and you are afraid that God will not give them to you, remember that God ſtands by beſeeching you to accept the ſame thing which you are beſeeching him to give. God is the firſt ſuitor and ſolicitor; God prays you to take Chriſt, and you pray him to give you Chriſt: What have you now to do, but to take him? And here underſtand, that this taking is no impoſſible buſineſs; it is no more but your hearty conſenting. And (p. 56.) when God in the goſpel bids you *take Jeſus Chriſt*, and beſeecheth you to be reconciled to him; if your heart anſwers, *Lord, I am willing*; *I will accept of Chriſt, and be thankful*; why then the match is made between Chriſt and you; and the marriage-covenant is truly entered into, which none can diſſolve. If Chriſt were not firſt willing, he would not be the ſuitor, and make the motion; and if he be willing, and you be willing, what can break the match?"

To this he anſwers—"He is much unſatisfied that I ſeem to make it ſo eaſy a matter to believe, when others of the orthodox do heighten the difficulty of the duty†. If it implies no more than an acceptance of

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* Mr. Baxter, *ubi ſupra*, p. 37.

† Mr. Norton, Orthod. Evang. p. 206, &c.

Chriſt and life, how come ſo many that pretend to Chriſt, and rely upon him, and claim an intereſt in him, (which ſure they would not do, if they did not conſent to have him); how come ſo many of them (ſaith he) to be deceived and diſclaimed at laſt, and their faith to periſh with them?" (Matth. vii. 21, 22.) "All may ſeem fair, (ſaith Dr. Twiſs[*]) no reigning ſin appearing, whereby the converſation is defiled; yet a man may deceive himſelf. O how many have thought that Chriſt was moſt dear to them, and that the hopes of heaven were their chiefeſt hopes, who have left Chriſt, though with ſorrow, when he bid them let go all," as Mr. Baxter[†] hath obſerved; who doth hereupon conclude—"I ſhall never be ſo confident of any man's fidelity to Chriſt, as not withal to ſuſpect that he may poſſibly forſake him; nor ſhall I boaſt of any man's ſervice for the goſpel, but with a jealouſy that he may be drawn to do as much againſt it[‡]."—Alas, Sir, your *ſaving faith* is not of common extraction; 'tis a ſpecial donative, "merited by Chriſt but for a very few," as Dr. Twiſs[§] tells us; and peculiar to the elect, as our divines conclude from Tit. i. 1.

7. I have told him—"That God hath, under his hand and ſeal, made a full and free deed of gift to him and all ſinners, of Chriſt, and with him of pardon and ſalvation; and all this on condition of his acceptance or conſent. That it was comfort to know he might have Chriſt if he would, and to find this to be the ſum of the goſpel: Rev. xxii. 17. *Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*[||]."

To this he readily anſwers, out of Dr. Twiſs[¶]—"That 'till a man believes, it is not known either to himſelf, or any other man, that he ſhall have any benefit by the death of Chriſt; only God knows from everlaſting, who ſhall have benefit by the death of Chriſt, and who not; foraſmuch as he hath determined to give faith in Chriſt to ſome, and not to others; and accordingly hath ſent Chriſt into the world for their ſakes.

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[*] Page 102.

[†] Mr. Baxter's Directions for Peace of Conſcience--*Epiſt. Ded.*

[‡] Ib. [§] *Ubi ſupra*, p. 152. [||] Mr. Baxter, ib. p. 43. [¶] Ib. p. 164.

8. I have told him—"That the Scripture itſelf, by the plainneſs and fulneſs of its expreſſion, makes it clear as the light, that Chriſt died for ALL."

At this he cries out—"What hath the death of Chriſt to do with my *election* or *reprobation?* Dr. Twiſs * tells us—That God, in his decree, did no more conſider the *death* of his Son, than the *faith* of the elect.

9. I have told him of a world of comfort—"which even the *graceleſs* may gather from univerſal or general mercy. To this purpoſe I find that Scripture alledged, John iii. 16.—"God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life."

Here he interpoſeth a diſtinction of Dr. Twiſs's †—"The love of God, and of Chriſt, to all, goes no further (ſaith he) than this—That *whoſoever believeth in him ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* But God's ſpecial love to his elect is, to ſend Chriſt into the world, to merit not that only for them which is to be conferred upon the condition of faith; but to merit faith alſo for them, which is conferred upon them abſolutely, and upon no condition."

10. I have adviſed him to get clear apprehenſions of the freeneſs and univerſality of the New Covenant, or Law of Grace.—"‡ No man on earth is excluded in the tenor of this covenant; and therefore, (ſaid I) you are certainly not excluded; and if not excluded, you muſt needs be included."

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* Dr. Twiſs, *ubi ſupra*, p. 139.

† Ib. p. 164.

‡ Mr. Baxter, ib. p. 33.

But he returns this anſwer—“ He underſtands not how the covenant of grace can extend to ſuch as God did implacably hate upon the account of Adam's ſin, and decreed to paſs them by in the communication of grace ſufficient and neceſſary to faith and repentance, without which there is no adoption, or pardon.”

11. I told him—“ God invites all, without exception, to mercy and ſalvation; and therefore there was no reaſon why he ſhould doubt of it.”

He replies—“ God's invitation is no other than by profeſſing, that by faith and repentance they ſhall be ſaved; without faith and repentance, they ſhall be damned*, (as Dr. Twiſs reſolveth); and he tells us, moreover, That Auſtin hath long ago profeſſed, that to ſay God would have *all to be ſaved, and none to periſh,* is to deny the firſt article of our creed, concerning God's omnipotency†.”

12. I have repreſented what abundance of comfort *general* mercy, or grace, may afford the ſoul, before it perceive (yea, or receive) any *ſpecial* grace: For,

1. “ All the terrifying temptations which are grounded on miſrepreſentations of God, (as if he were a cruel deſtroyer to be fled from) are diſpelled by the due conſideration of his goodneſs, and the deep-ſettled apprehenſion of his gracious, merciful, lovely nature; (which, indeed, is the firſt work of true religion, and the very maſter radical act of true grace, and the chief maintainer of ſpiritual life and motion.)

2. “ All theſe temptations are yet more effectually diſpelled, by conſidering this merciful Divine nature, dwelling in fleſh, becoming man by condeſcending to the aſſumption of our human nature, and ſo coming near us, and aſſuming the office of

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* Mr. Baxter, p. 54.

† Ib. p. 51.

being the Mediator, the Redeemer, the Saviour of the World.

3. "All our doubts and fears that proceed from our former ſins—have all a preſent remedy in the fulneſs and ſufficiency of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, even for all the world; ſo that no ſin is ſo great, but it is fully ſatisfied for, &c.

4. "All our doubts and fears, that ariſe from an apprehenſion of God's unwillingneſs to ſhew us mercy, and to give us Chriſt and life in him, ariſe from the miſapprehenſion of Chriſt's unwillingneſs to be ours; or at leaſt from the uncertainty of his unwillingneſs; theſe have all a ſufficient remedy in the general extent and tenor of the new covenant *.

"From which principles our divines do infer †:

1. "A poſſibility of your ſalvation.

2. "Nay, though you were yet graceleſs, you have now this comfort, that your ſalvation is probable as well as poſſible; you are very fair for it. The terms are not hard in themſelves on which it is tendered; for Chriſt's yoke is eaſy, his burden light, and his commands are not grievous.

3. "Yea, this exceeding comfort there is, even for them that are graceleſs, that their ſalvation is conditionally certain, and the condition is but their own willingneſs."

But all this gives *Deſolatus* no ſatisfaction. As to the greateſt part of mankind, he finds in God a general unwillingneſs of their ſalvation; for, as if he were a cruel deſtroyer (according to the Synod of Dort) he caſt them off without any vincible fault of theirs (for the ſin of Adam); and out of an immutable hatred againſt them, he decreed to withhold from them all grace ſufficient unto faith and repentance: and hence it follows, that Chriſt procured no ſuch grace for them; and conſequently, that his merit is inſufficient: And therefore if par-

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* Mr. Baxter, *ubi ſupra*, p. 46, 47.

† Ib. page 43.

don and ſalvation be tendered to them, it cannot be done ſeriouſly, and in earneſt, but in mockery and deluſion. Hereupon he concludes, that pardon and ſalvation being offered only upon ſuch conditions as are impoſſible, the obtaining them is ſo far from being certain, that it is neither probable nor poſſible.

Laſtly, "[*] I have conjured him not to think of God's mercifulneſs with diſtinguiſhing, extenuating thoughts, nor to limit it by the bounds of our frail underſtandings; for the heavens are not ſo far above the earth, as his thoughts and ways are above ours. I bid him ſtill remember, that he muſt have no low thoughts of God's goodneſs; but apprehend it as bearing proportion with his power. As it is blaſphemy to limit his power, ſo it is to limit his goodneſs. I [†] adviſed him to conſider, that even under the terrible law, when God proclaims to Moſes his own name, and therein his nature, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. the firſt and greateſt part is, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin: And he hath ſworn that he hath no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner, but rather that he return and live."

For this he finds an evaſion too, out of Dr. Twiſs; where in anſwer to the text now alledged, he replies thus: "[‡] As for that of ſwearing by himſelf, that he wills not (for ſo the tranſlator of Tilenus had rendered it,) *the death of a ſinner*, there is no ſuch text at all (ſaith he;) the moſt authentical tranſlation of our own church reads it, 'I have no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner.' And as Piſcator obſerves, A man may will that wherein he takes no pleaſure; like as a ſick man takes no pleaſure in a bitter potion, yet he is willing to take it, to recover his health.

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[*] Mr. Baxter, ib. page 18. [†] Ibid. page 17. [‡] *Ubi ſupra*, p. 52, 53.

Having proceeded thus far, I ſaw ſo little probability of ſucceſs, that I reſolved to have him treated with the beſt advantage I could; and therefore I have called in your aſſiſtance, that the authority of your office may add ſome weight and force to ſuch arguments as you ſhall think fit to produce for his reſtitution. And now, Sir, that you are acquainted as well with the diſeaſe as with the patient, I beſeech you to beſtow a charitable viſit upon him.

DIO. I will bear you company to his chamber.

SAMAR. I am as good as my word you ſee, my *Deſolatus*; my friendſhip is ſo faſt, and ſo unfeigned, it will not ſuffer me to be long from you: but here is another worthy friend of yours, Mr. *Diotrephes*, come to viſit you; I hope his company and conference will adminiſter a great deal of ſatisfaction and comfort to you; to his charity therefore I commend you for a while.—

⁂ The Dialogue here turns between *Diotrephes* and *Deſolatus*.

DIO. Being informed that you lay under ſome preſſures upon your ſpirit, I took this opportunity to ſhew my readineſs to do you the beſt office of kindneſs I am able; and now my prayer is, That the God of hope would fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt *.

DESO. Sir, you are very kindly welcome; and I heartily thank you for your preſence and your prayers; though I have too much reaſon to conclude, that I ſhall reap no fruit or benefit by them.

DIO. Do not draw ſuch uncomfortable concluſions againſt yourſelf: I cannot think you have any premiſes from which ſuch a concluſion doth neceſſarily follow. You know what the Pſalmiſt ſaith of Almighty God; "He healeth the broken in heart, and giveth medicine to heal their ſickneſs; and he lifteth up them that be bowed down [*].” And one end of the inſtitution of our office, is, that we ſhould be helpers towards the joy of God's people; and that as well to blow it up to a recovery when it is loſt, as to kindle it at firſt where it is wanting. Be of good cheer therefore; for I doubt not, there will come a comfortable voice out of this cloud, to give you notice that God will own you, as he did our Saviour [†]; though as the diſciples then, ſo you at this preſent, be amazed to find yourſelf overſhadowed, and fear as you enter into the cloud: though it be thus with you at this inſtant, yet I ſay there will come a voice out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved Son; God will ſay unto your ſoul, I am thy ſalvation.

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* Rom. xv. 13.

Deso. Oh Sir, time was when I had the ſame preſentments of God's favour with yourſelf: I could (as I flattered myſelf), by the eye of faith diſcover the chearful countenance of a Father looking upon me through the moſt diſmal cloud that overſhadowed me; and I have been able to ſay with the prophet, “This was my comfort in my affliction, that thy word hath quickened me [‡]:” I had received ſuch a meaſure of illumination from heaven, that I thought myſelf able to afford eyes to the blind, and light to ſuch as ſate under the darkeſt ſhades of deſertion: but now it is my ſad fate to ſuffer a total eclipſe of comfort. God's rod hath ſmitten the waters of my ciſtern, and turned them into blood, and it is become a frightful ſerpent to me.

Dio. I beſeech you, do not call it your fate: There is a gracious providence in this diſpenſation you lie under; and though it be grievous for the preſent, (as all afflictions are) being deſigned for your humiliation; yet the fruit of it being an increaſe of righteouſneſs, will be attended with peace and aſſurance for ever. In the mean while conſider, though the waters of your ciſtern be turned into blood; yet thoſe in the fountain are ſweet and clear ſtill; God can turn them into wine for you. Though your ciſtern be quite dry, the Rock that ſhould ſupply it is inexhauſtible; and out of that Rock, God will ſatisfy you with a beverage as ſweet as honey *. Your ſun will gradually get up, and overlook the dark umbrage of this interpoſition; and when the eclipſe is over, his influences will return upon your ſoul with intereſt, in a ſatisfactory duplication of your comfort.

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[*] Luke ix. 34, 35. [†] Pſal. cxix. 50. [‡] Pſal. cxlvii. 3.--cxlv. 14.

Deso. As my feeling of the refreſhments of the Spirit is gone, ſo are all my hopes departed with it. If there be but ſo much as a ſmoke, we may conjecture, at leaſt, that it is poſſible there may be ſome fire: But——

Dio. Give me leave, good Sir, to interrupt you.——To my apprehenſion, there is ſo much ſmoke and heat too, that I muſt conclude the fire cannot be extinguiſhed. If we ſhould determine men to be dead upon every deprivation of ſenſe in them, we ſhould become not only unchriſtian, but inhuman, and bury many men alive. —Becauſe the night is very dark, ſhould we put out the candle too? And inſtead of betaking ourſelves to our natural reſt in bed, ſhould we ſtep into our coffin, out of an opinion that the day-ſpring will never return to viſit us? And becauſe we obſerve that the trees are uncloathed in winter, and have loſt their verdure and their beauty; were it not madneſs therefore to take an axe, and cut them down for fuel, as if it were impoſſible the ſap ſhould ever aſcend to make them bud and bloſſom, and become fruitful any more? Were you not alive in your mother'

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* Pſal. lxxxi. ult.

mother's womb, and in a thriving condition? yet ſure you will not pretend then to have had any ſenſe of it! I pray therefore be you ſatisfied; this is but a lethargy, not a death—it is but your winter, ſummer is a coming on—it is but your night; your heavineſs will march away with it, and then joy will come upon you in the morning. Though the poor ſheep may be bewildered, and loſt in a ſtate of deſolation*; yet ſuch is the care and compaſſion of the good Shepherd, he will ſeek it, and fetch it home upon his own ſhoulders.

Deso. Sir, were I ſure I did belong to his fold, I ſhould not doubt of his care over me; for he hath promiſed in behalf of all his ſheep, that *he will give them eternal life, and* that *they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of his hand*†.

Dio. Why ſhould you doubt your relation to him? his fold is his church, and his ſheep are ſaid to be thoſe that *hear his voice, and follow him* ‡: they are known by that ear-mark, and by the ſtrait path they walk in, after his precepts and example.

Deso. I know, Sir, that his church is his fold; but there are many in it, that are not of it; and though they hear his voice, and follow him for a ſeaſon §, yet they draw back at laſt unto perdition, as many did, that are ſaid to have believed on him. They are only ſecured in point of Chriſt's care and cuſtody, who have an intereſt in his promiſes.

Dio. You know it is the promiſe of the goſpel, that *whoſoever believes in Chriſt crucified, ſhould not periſh, but have life everlaſting* ‖. And it is the reſolution of that famous Synod at Dort—That this promiſe, together with the injunction of repentance and faith, ought promiſcuouſly, and without diſtinction, to be declared and publiſhed to all men and people, to whom God, in his good pleaſure, ſends the goſpel.—[In the chapter of Redempt. Art. V.

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* Luke xv.

† John x. 28.

‡ John x. 27.

§ Heb. x. 38. John vi. 66.

‖ John iii. 16.

Deso. I am not ignorant, Sir, that the goſpel is God's revealed will, and that the promiſes thereof are general; at leaſt, promiſcuouſly to be preached: But the decree concerning every man's ſalvation, is not made or calculated according to the revelations thereof (which are not God's will, in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe) but according to his ſecret will, or bene-placiture; ſo that many, yea, moſt to whom thoſe promiſes are declared, are not at all concerned in the benefit that is promiſed.

Dio. Though that Synod hath not expreſly defined any thing in this queſtion; yet ſome of the members of it, and [*] Martinius by name, ſaith—That the redemption by Chriſt is *univerſal*; and that the benefit is not only ſufficient, but alſo truly intended and deſtined for *every one*; otherwiſe (ſaith he) we could not infer a neceſſity of every man's believing that it belongs to him; and this would exempt moſt men from the chief duty of the goſpel.

Deso. But Sir, I find even that man that goes ſo far, falls back again, and ſpills all the milk of conſolation he had given down in thoſe theſes: for ſoon after he puts in his exceptions, and enters ſuch a caveat againſt the greateſt part of mankind, as doth infallibly keep them out of poſſeſſion of the benefit; for (ſaith he) this univerſal redemption muſt be very circumſpectly handled, (as to point of ſatisfaction and merit); and a double exception he propounds to limit them: One reſpecting the things, another the perſons. Chriſt (he ſaith) hath not ſatisfied for a permanent impenitency, much leſs for a perſevering contumacy; and hence it comes to paſs that the wrath of God abides upon unbelievers; and all their ſins, original, actual, againſt law and goſpel, are imputed to them: And yet, (O ſtrange ſubtlety!) he hath merited grace for all, even for the impenitent and unbelievers! But what grace? Why; remiſſion of ſins, and eternal life, under the condition of faith and repentance; but not grace ſufficient and neceſſary unto that faith and repentance. From hence you will conclude that he muſt put in another exception, a caveat againſt perſons too; and it is this: That although Chriſt hath promiſcuouſly ſo ſatisfied for all men, that their ſins may be remitted; (*viz.* if they repent and believe) that is, (when they are invited to take Chriſt's eaſy yoke) if they perform an impoſſible condition: yet in truth, he hath procured the ſins of the *elect* only, (in whom that condition is effected by an irreſiſtible grace and operation) to be remitted eventually. So that Chriſt having made no ſatisfaction for the ſin of final impenitency, and having decreed to let them fall inevitably into that ſtate, by withholding grace ſufficient and neceſſary to keep them from it; what advantage, I beſeech you, do theſe poor wretches receive from his merits and ſatisfaction?

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[*] Act. Syn. Dord. 2 par. page 104, 105. *De Morte Chriſti pro omnibus.* Th. 10, 11.

[†] See Theſ. xvi, &c.

DIO. But the Synod declares their ſenſe more fully in this article:—"That many being called by the goſpel, do not repent, nor believe in Chriſt, but periſh in infidelity: This comes not to paſs (ſay they) through any inſufficiency of Chriſt's ſacrifice *; for that is a moſt perfect ſacrifice and ſatisfaction for ſins of infinite price and value, abundantly ſufficient to expiate the ſins of the whole world; and that it is therefore of ſo great value, becauſe the perſon that was offered up, was the only-begotten Son of God; and becauſe his death was joined with a feeling of God's wrath, and of the curſe which we had deſerved by our ſins." And they declare this to be goſpel—" That whoſoever believes, ſhall not periſh, but have life everlaſting."

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* Chapter of Redempt. Art. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Deso. 'Tis true [if they believe] upon that condition: But did God purpoſe[*] to cauſe in men this condition or not? In the elect he did; upon whom only it was the moſt free counſel, gracious will and intention of God the Father, that the efficacy of that ſacrifice ſhould ſtream forth to the production of faith in them, by an irreſiſtible operation, as the Synod hath more at large declared: So that a man muſt have the work of ſpecial grace wrought in him, and the Spirit of Chriſt abiding with him, before he can have aſſurance of his intereſt in Chriſt.

Dio. 'Tis very true--" They that have not the Spirit of Chriſt are none of his[†]:" But you could not ſo much as ſay—" That Jeſus Chriſt is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt[‡];" yet this I know is your ſtedfaſt profeſſion. And " becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." And can you not pray to God too, as well as profeſs to believe in him?

Deso. 'Tis moſt certain we ſhould not have believed Chriſt to have been the Meſſiah, and the Son of God, if the Holy Ghoſt had not ſealed the revelation to us, and confirmed it with a world of miracles: But having this revelation by us, Chriſt may be acknowledged to be the Lord, without the ſpecial inhabitation of his Spirit to prompt us to it; and his influences may be ſufficient to move us unto prayer, when they are inſufficient to renew us unto ſalvation; and therefore, " Not every one that ſaith Lord, Lord; (not every ſupplicant) ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of the Father which is in heaven;" Matth. vii. 21.

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[*] Mr. Baxter's Preface to the Grot. Relig. Sect. ix. Syn. Dord. ib. Art. 8.

[†] Rom. viii. 9.

[‡] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Dio. Hold you cloſe to this principle, that heaven ſhall be allotted to him for a portion that doth the will of God :—“ For the Lord loveth judgment, and forſaketh not his ſaints, (or his that be godly) they are preſerved for ever*.”

Deso. ’Tis not enough to do God’s will ; for the ſubſtance of the work, that may be done by the unſanctified : But it muſt be done after a ſpiritual and gracious manner alſo †: and ſo none but the ſaints and truly godly do it ; and they are called *his* by a peculiar title of election, and are ſure to be preſerved for ever.”

Dio. I remember you have been looked upon as a perſon eminent for godlineſs ; and forward, not only to do the will of God ; but when the will of God required it, to ſuffer alſo for your well-doing. Now St. Peter tells you, and he prefixeth a kind of oath to his aſſerveration ; ſaying—“ Of a truth, I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons ; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him ‡.”

Deso. Sir, the ſenſe of that text muſt admit of a limitation ; for, as the Synod of Dort hath declared §, “ God hath choſen in Chriſt unto ſalvation a ſet number of certain men, neither better nor more worthy than others, but equally loſt and lying in the common miſery with others whom he paſſed over unto everlaſting deſtruction.” And therefore Diodati tells us, in his annotation upon that text, that Peter ſpeaketh not here “ of that original of the will and pleaſure of God, by which he taketh into favour one, who of himſelf is as unworthy as the other, Rom. ix. 11. 1 Cor. iv. 7. || but of that conſequent degree of his love towards the work of his grace, in what

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* Pſal. xxxvii. 28. † Dr. Twiſs, ib. p. 48. ‡ Acts x. 34, 35. § Chap. i. Acts 7. with xv.

|| Do theſe texts ſerve the intereſts of the Sublapſarians, or Supralapſarians, or both, or neither?

nation or quality of perſon ſoever it be found, to maintain, increaſe, and make it up."—This is his ſenſe.

Dio. But that learned man does conclude, you ſee, that where God hath begun his work of grace, he will not fail to maintain, increaſe, and make it up; and this is that very thing whereof the apoſtle is ſo confident—"That he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform (or finiſh) it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt*."

Deso. This perſuaſion of the apoſtle is but the reſult of his charity towards thoſe Philippians, as appears by the next verſe. Where God begins a good work, he is willing and ready (in a way ſuitable to his wiſdom, juſtice, and mercy) to accompliſh it; but when the work is to be a duty, he expects from his creature a voluntary co-operation to it, without which it cannot be ſuch; but if he carries on the good work to its final period irreſiſtibly, ſo that neither the neglect nor the perverſity of man can hinder it, how comes it to paſs that ſo many are guilty of apoſtacy, and draw back unto perdition†?

Dio. Why are you troubling yourſelf about temporary profeſſors and hypocrites, whoſe faith is falſe and unſound, and their grace counterfeit? Many great divines have told us, That the leaſt‡ meaſure of true grace is a ſeed of regeneration, and implies the man that hath it to be ſanctified and juſtified: and then you know your eſtate is unchangeable; you are ſealed up with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. In the mean while—"The foundation of the Lord ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal; the Lord knoweth them that are his §."

Deso. I ſuppoſe, Sir, you deliver not your own judgment if you ſay, That the faith of backſliders is falſe, and their grace counterfeit*. You cannot forget the parable that tells us, the faith that withers upon trial, ſprings out of the ſame ſeed of the word with that which is indefectible. All grace is true; what is counterfeit, ought not to be honoured with ſo good a title. The grace that doth not ſanctify, doth not fail of that effect becauſe it is not true, but becauſe it is too little: for the leaſt ſeed of grace is not ſufficient to ſanctify and intitle us to a ſtate of juſtification, and an indefectible perſeverance. To this purpoſe a man much of your own judgment hath delivered himſelf, in theſe words:—"†As I know of no ſuch degree of habitual grace in this life, which would preſerve men from apoſtacy without God's continued, tutelary, preſerving grace; ſo I know of no ſuch thing as true ſanctification and juſtification, without that grace which is radicated in the ſoul, and ſo may be called a confirmed ſtate, and without the antecedent and concomitant decree of God's election, which layeth a certain ground of perſeverance."—Here then is the foundation, with the ſeal of God upon it. But who can break open this ſeal, and give me a ſight of my own name engraven upon that foundation? The ſovereign elixir that can cure my diſeaſe, lyeth in no other but this very cabinet.

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* Phil. i. 6. † Heb. x. 38.

‡ See the Declaration of the Congregational Churches: Cap. xiv. n. 3.

§ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Dio, The ſeal is broke open at your effectual calling, when God ſends you down a tranſcript, or copy, of the original record, with ſome bread of comfort from his own table, to refreſh you, and give you aſſurance of your communion with him. To this purpoſe, the Spirit ſaith unto the churches—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna; and will give him a white ſtone, and in that ſtone a new name written, which no man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth it‡."

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* See Mr. Baxter on Saving Faith, p. 16.

† Mr. Baxter's Account of Perſeverance, p. 33.

‡ Rev. ii. 17.

Deso. Sir, I obſerve many men of your profeſſion very apt to adulterate the goſpel, to ſerve the preſent exigence of the patient to whom they are called to adminiſter. Here now you do more than inſinuate, that the effectual calling is a privilege ſo proper to the elect, that a man needs no other argument than that, to conclude his abſolute election: But when you treat the reprobates under the title of unregenerate, you urge them to believe that they are all comprehended in the act of grace, and ſo much within the reach of an effectual calling, that it is none but their own fault if they loſe the benefit thereof. The bleſſed Spirit in that place quoted by you, ſpeaks of a heavenly collation after victory: But what is that to my comfort? For ſhould my arrogance inliſt me amongſt ſuch conquerors, I ſhould ſoon find it cowed, and utterly defeated, when I come to paſs the muſter. I do wiſh, with ſome paſſion, that I could taſte the bread of that bleſſed communion; but I know it is a manna that falls immediately from heaven, and it is not yours, but a more ſecret hand of Providence that muſt convey it; but it is a bread ſo peculiar to the children, that the dogs are not allowed ſo much as any crumbs of it: And therefore, in ſuggeſting this divine repaſt, prepared for the entertainment of God's ſpecial jewels, while you think to raviſh my appetite, you do famiſh it, and procure me really the ſenſe of ſuch torments as were inflicted upon *Tantalus* but in poet's fiction. Alas, Sir, what do you in telling me of that *white ſtone*, unleſs you could enable me to ſee it, and read the ſuperſcription, which is impoſſible, 'till I firſt receive it. The finger of God's Spirit hath not yet written out that tranſcript upon the tables of my heart: and I am ſure there is no other ſecretary can do it; neither have I any reaſon to expect it from him: for as that manna falls not every day, nor upon every tent of the congregation; ſo neither do thoſe *white ſtones* pave the common ſtreets, nor bear our ordinary Chriſtian, much leſs our ſurnames, impoſed upon us by traduction. Such as have an intereſt in the Book of Life, indeed, (they ſay) their title is abſolute; their names being written therein, out of God's mere free-grace and pleaſure, without reſpect to faith and obedience, or any good quality whatſoever in them. Upon this account I may acknowledge, with modeſty enough, that no man can be fitter than myſelf to have a place in that eternal ſchedule. But when I reflect upon thoſe millions, not ſo much as one ſingle thought worſe than myſelf, left out of it; I find the odds ſo great againſt me, that I cannot yield to flatter myſelf into a belief of it.

Dio. There is no reaſon in the world, the ſenſe of your ſins, (how many or how great ſoever) or the opinion of your mere nothingneſs, ſhould diſcourage or detain you from a perſuaſion of your election. Had your virtue been a motive or inducement to Almighty God, to put you into his decree; in that caſe, if you brought your virtue to the balance, and found it light, you ſhould have reaſon to return, jealous of your ſtate, and ſorrowful. But ſeeing God hath conſidered no ſuch thing in you, but put you freely into ſuch a decree as comprehends and provides all means and requiſites whatſoever, for your irreſiſtible ſanctification, perſeverance and glory; the apprehenſion of this, methinks, ſhould ſcatter your fears and doubts, and make you rejoice "with joy unſpeakable and glorious[*]". Now that this is a moſt unqueſtionable truth, we have the determination of the Synod of Dort[†]: which declares, That "God hath choſen us from eternity, both unto grace and glory, both unto ſalvation and the way of ſalvation; which he hath prepared, that we ſhould walk therein." So that God hath not only immutably decreed the end, but alſo the means by which it is to be inſuperably accompliſhed.

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[*] 1 Peter i. 8.

[†] Chap. i. Art. 8.

Deso. I wonder not at all at their complacence in the opinion of ſuch an abſolute election, who, as their doctrine pretends, are carried on by an irreſiſtible operation, to preſume or rely upon it. Who would not be glad of ſo much ſecurity, that he might diſband his fears and anxiety, and care of duty; and be able to ſing a *requiem* to his ſoul, and rock her aſleep with ſuch a charm as this:—"Soul, thou haſt ſufficient proviſions for thy eternal welfare, laid up in the decree of thine election; and this ſhall be infallibly diſburſed to ſerve all thy needs, in thy ſeveral ſtages of converſion, ſanctification, and perſeverance, 'till thou doſt arrive at glory."—But ſouls in the temper of mine, conflicting with doubts and jealouſies, (if God were pleaſed to reverſe that abſolute decree) might find more encouragement in a promiſe of acceptation in the Beloved, *that is*, an election upon faith and repentance; for then (God's ordinary concourſe, and gracious aſſiſtance continued) the poſſibility of obtaining would put life into their hopes, and their hopes would quicken them unto action: But on the contrary, the thoughts of an impoſſibility, which the decree of abſolute reprobation muſt needs ſuggeſt to the conſiderate, do ſtrike all hopes dead, and put all good endeavours into a lethargy, or a ſtate of languiſhing. This is like a plucking off our chariot wheels, and yet urging us with threatenings, and ſevere diſcipline, to drive through the Red Sea, that we may gain a paſſage into Canaan. As for that proviſion of means you mention, what comfort can be reaped from it, to a perſon that ſuſpects himſelf debarred the end, and that immutably? Though the ſame ſhowers fall providentially upon the tares, in regard of their commixture with the wheat, yet this can as little prevent their doom, as change their nature; for all that, "They ſhall be bound up in bundles, and be caſt into the fire.*"

Dio. Your mind and diſcourſe run altogether upon the account of reprobates. But what if they abuſe the outward means employed for their converſion, and periſh for their contempt of it; "God hath his choſen, whom he will compel to come in†:" *that is*—"In the good hour, the miniſtry of the Word ſhall be attended, or ſeconded, by an effectual‡, irreſiſtible work of the Holy Ghoſt upon their whole ſoul, for the producing in them a new ſpiritual life;" and being thus regenerated, their eſtate (as you cannot deny) is then (as to the object or thing) immutably and infallibly certain.

Deso. The *new birth*, or *effectual calling*, (which is inſeparable from a lively faith) I perceive, is the only phial that contains the *aqua vitæ*, to cure theſe fainting fits of fear and deſperation. But grant a true child of God ſhall never be permitted ſo far to play the prodigal, as to be diſinherited; what comfort will this afford him, though his life be competently upright and regular, who, to deal ingenuouſly, cannot boaſt of omnipotent infuſions, which he never felt, nor pretend to any reformation wrought in him irreſiſtibly, in an inſtant: but to ſuch only as the Holy Ghoſt, in Scripture, hath produced by rational motives and arguments, and upon deliberate adviſement too? For that inſtantaneous and irreſiſtible regeneration, I am perſuaded, there are very few that feel it, even of thoſe paſſionate diſputers for it. But were they reduced to a ſtate of deſolation, (as I am) I am confident their arguments would appear ſophiſtry to themſelves, and vaniſh into nothing. Some looſe and vicious perſons finding themſelves, by ſome happy providence, brought on a ſudden

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[*] Matth. xiii. 30.

[†] Mr. Baxter's making light of Chriſt, p. 4.

[‡] Declaration of the Congregational Churches: Chap. xx. n. 4.

out of love with their crimes, may poſſibly impute their change to ſuch an irreſiſtible operation of the Holy Ghoſt. But this opinion many times betrays them to new dangers, while they conclude, they are carried by the ſame, or like impulſion, when they have made choice of ſome other by-way, and run into new exorbitancies; yet I will not deny but the Holy Ghoſt may uſe that ſhort method upon ſome ſpecial occaſions, (as in the converſion of Paul, and perhaps Auſtin): But when he doth uſe it, it is very rare and extraordinary. Otherwiſe, being conſcious to no ſuch manner of production in myſelf, I ſhall yet have more ground to diſbelieve my own regeneration.

Dio. God forbid I ſhould go about to add wound to wound, or affliction to affliction, by raiſing new doubts in you*; I deſire rather to be calm, and ſatisfy ſuch as are raiſed already. However, you may remember, it is the general opinion that this doubtfulneſs of your own ſincerity, may very well conſiſt with the ſtate of grace; and it is a very great ſign you fear God, and value his love and favour, that you are ſo much troubled upon your jealouſy that you want it.

Deso. Theſe marks, Sir, whatever aſſurance they may give us for the preſent, they are not ſo infallible but they may deceive us; yea, and all other marks whatſoever.—"I may have a notional knowledge of Chriſt, and the neceſſity of his blood, and of the excellency of ſalvation; and yet periſh. I may weep at the Hiſtory of his Paſſion, when I read how he was uſed by the Jews; and yet periſh. I may come deſirouſly to his word and ordinances; and yet periſh†. I may, in a fit of fear, have ſtrong deſires after a Chriſt to eaſe me, and ſave me from God's wrath; and yet periſh. I may obey him in many things, ſo far as will not ruin me in the world; and eſcape much of the pollutions of the world by his knowledge; and yet periſh. I may ſuffer, and loſe much for him; ſome parcels of my pleaſures and profits I may part with, in hope of ſalvation; and yet periſh. I may be eſteemed by others a man zealous for Chriſt, and be loved and admired upon that account; and yet periſh. I may be a zealous preacher of Chriſt and ſalvation, and reprove others for their neglect of both, and lament the ſin of the world with moſt bitter and paſſionate expreſſions; and yet periſh. I may verily think that I ſet more by Chriſt and ſalvation, than by any thing elſe whatſoever; and yet be miſtaken, and periſh everlaſtingly." Again*—"By common grace a man may not only know, but love God alſo; and love him as merciful and gracious, as better than the creature, as beſt for him; yea, he may love God under the notion of the chiefeſt good and moſt deſirable end, in whoſe ſight and fruition everlaſting happineſs conſiſteth. And by common grace he may believe in Chriſt, or deſire him as a Saviour to free him from every ſin, and from ſin as ſin, or as it is againſt God."—This is the doctrine of a perſon† of great note, as you yourſelf very well know; and I pray what can a regenerate man do more? and how then ſhall he diſcriminate his ſaving grace from that common grace?

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* Dr. Twiſs, p. 159.

† Mr. Baxter's Sermon of making light of Chriſt, p. 55, 56.

DIO. That perſon tells you withal, in the ſame treatiſe‡—"That the acts of love or faith are conſiderable: I. Phyſically: 1. In general, as faith and love. 2. In ſpecial; as this faith and love about this object, the Father and the Son. And thus, by *common* grace, men may have *true* faith and love; *that is*, ſuch as is phyſically a true or real act. II. They are conſiderable, morally: and that, 1. Either as duty anſwering a precept [believe and love

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* See Mr. Baxter's additional ſheet, at the end of his Treat. on Sav. Faith.

† Mr. Baxter.

‡ Page 94. Prop. xiii.

God]; and thus they have an analogical, defective morality in them, and ſo are thus far ſincere or true; but not that the ſame true love or faith, *in ſpecie morali*, which the command requireth; for it commandeth us to love God above all, &c. III. They are conſiderable as conditions of the promiſes, and evidences of ſpiritual life in the ſoul; and thus wicked men, by common grace, are never made partakers of them. They have not the things themſelves; their faith and love is not the ſame thing which hath the promiſes made to them in the Goſpel; and ſo are not true or ſincere."—This is the full declaration of that perſon you mention.

Deso. Why, Sir, here is very cold comfort, if this be the beſt you can adminiſter: this is the grand objection I have againſt myſelf, and makes me doubt the ſincerity of my grace. I love God, and I believe in Chriſt: and this belief and love are phyſically true; they are real acts, and have a being: But they are morally defective, and inſincere; not the ſame thing which hath the promiſes made to them in the Goſpel; and conſequently are no evidences of ſpiritual life in my ſoul. So that all you have done, hath rather tended to cancel all my evidences for life and ſalvation, than to clear them up for me.

Dio. The moſt certain judgment a man can make of his ſtate and condition, is to be collected from the end he propounds to himſelf in his deſigns and actions: for every man hath one only prevalent ultimate end*, which is to be called, *the end of man*; or is the *chief ultimate end* of the habitual predominant inclination or diſpoſition of his ſoul, and of the tenor or bent of his courſe of life. All godly men make choice of God for this their end; but all the wicked make choice of the creature, and carnal ſelf, for theirs: So that we may judge beſt whether men

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* Mr. Baxter. Ib. Prepoſ. 10. and 11.

be regenerated or carnal, by the end that rules their hearts, and hath the greateſt intereſt in them.

Deso. Sir, I am now as much to ſeek as ever; for you ſaid even now, That a man may ſo love God and Chriſt, that he may verily think he ſets more by them than any thing elſe, and yet be miſtaken. Grant that I have accuſtomed myſelf to that eaſy yoke, that Chriſt ordinarily lays upon the ſhoulders of his diſciples, and can carry it to my thinking handſomely; yet ſhould Chriſt try me with a harder impoſition, as he did that young man in the Goſpel[*], How can I be able (having never been called to the like trial formerly) to ſecure my own ſincerity in that caſe? I may retreat and flinch back as he did, and depart ſorrowful from my Saviour. How can I be aſſured[†] of the ſtrength of my grace, and the proof of my ſincerity, if I ſhould be called to ſuffer martyrdom? Though I may come off in my active, I may fail in my paſſive obedience. And yet ſuppoſe I ſhould hold out here, the apoſtle doth at laſt inſinuate, That a man may give "all that he hath unto the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet want charity[‡]." And experience doth teach us, that men may lay down their lives in juſtification of their ſchiſms and rebellions, and yet be confident of their ſtate of grace and ſalvation: ſo that all this while a man is not able to diſtinguiſh[§], whether it be common or ſpecial grace that he is acted by: which makes the apoſtle ſay—"I know nothing by myſelf; yet am I not hereby juſtified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord:" 1 Cor. iv. 4.

Dio. 'Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themſelves with falſe hopes, and carnal preſumptions, of their being in the favour of God and ſtate of ſalvation, which hope of theirs ſhall periſh; yet ſuch as truly believe in the Lord Jeſus, and love him ſincerely, endeavouring to walk in all good conſcience before him, may in this life be certainly aſſured that they are in the ſtate of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope ſhall never make them aſhamed." So the Congregational Churches have determined, in their Declaration, chap. xviii. n. 1.

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[*] Mark x. 17, &c.

[†] Many have ſhrunk in greater trials, that paſt through leſs with reſolution and honour. Mr. Baxter. Ibid.

[‡] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

[§] Hereupon ſaith Mr. Baxter---" I much fear leaſt many learned, civil, orthodox men, do take common grace to be ſpecial, and ſo delude their own ſouls in the trial of themſelves.' ---Of Saving Faith, p. 49

Deso. No doubt, while men walk in all good conſcience, they may be aſſured, for the preſent, that they are in a ſtate of grace; ſo much the Remonſtrants will allow us; but not that they are in ſuch an indefectible ſtate, as is pretended to flow from an abſolute election: and yet they will allow men in that ſtate too to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" and that hope ſhall not make them aſhamed: But if "They ſhew not the ſame diligence* (as at the beginning of their converſion) to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end;" if they *leave their firſt love*†, (as the angel of the church of Epheſus did); their backſliding will make them aſhamed, though their hope does not. And if they "who were once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift‡, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" if *they* may *fall away*, then let them who boaſt of a more ſpecial and inſuperable grace, "not be too high minded, but fear§." Remember what expreſſions the clear evidence of truth, (for matter of fact) hath extorted from the pen of Mr. Baxter||, in theſe words:—"It is exceeding hard to determine how great, many, or long, the ſins of a true believer may be." And if thoſe ſins be murder, adultery, or the like, and long continued in; ſhall that believer be certain ſtill of his election? Shall he not rather ſuſpect it was but common grace that wrought him to that belief? He hath reaſon certainly to ſuſpect it, unleſs he adds preſumption to his other crimes. So that, upon the whole matter, without a ſpecial Revelation, a man cannot 'till his doomſday be certain of his election; becauſe he knows not what temptation he may fall into, nor how he ſhall demean himſelf under it: and if he perſeveres 'till then in his obedience, the Remonſtrants will ſecure him of his election, as well as you.

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* Heb. vi. 11. † Rev. ii. 4. ‡ Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. § Rom. xi. 20.
|| Diſput. of Right to Sacrament, p. 337.

DIO. We ſay—" True Believers may have the aſſurance of their ſalvation divers ways ſhaken, diminiſhed, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preſerving of it—by falling into ſome ſpecial ſin, which woundeth the conſcience, and grieveth the Spirit—by ſome ſudden or vehement temptation—by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance; ſuffering even ſuch as fear him to walk in darkneſs, and to have no light; yet are they not utterly deſtitute of that ſeed of God, and life of faith; that love of Chriſt and the brethren, that ſincerity of heart, and conſcience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this aſſurance may in due time be revived; and by the which, in the mean time, they are ſupported from utter deſpair."—*Declaration of the Congregational Churches*, chap. xviii. n. 4.

DESO. It ſeems then, that once true believers, though they fall into ſome ſpecial ſin, which wounds the conſcience, and grieves the Spirit, (for the other branches I ſhall not inſiſt upon); and though that ſin or ſins be never ſo great and long continued in, (for it is hard to determine how great, how many, or how long thoſe ſins may be, as was confeſſed even now) yet they retain the ſeed of God, and the life of faith, and the love of Chriſt, with ſincerity of heart and conſcience of duty; and out of theſe, by the operation of the Spirit, their aſſurance is ſure to be revived. Then David addreſſed a needleſs petition to have *a new heart created*, and *a right ſpirit renewed* in him, if that ſeed of God, and life of faith, and ſincerity of heart, were ſtill in him before. Is it not rather that great engine of an abſolute election, that ſcrues ſuch believers up again after theſe deſperate falls[*]? But the non-elect, tho' by the help of common-grace, and their moſt diligent improvement of it, they lead never ſo ſtrict and ſevere a courſe of life; yet if being led into temptation by an efficacious permiſſion, they miſcarry under it, they fall not forward, (as thoſe believers are ſaid to do to their advantage) but backwards, and can never riſe again to any hope of ſalvation or pardon, but muſt break their necks irrecoverably: Nay, though he walks ever ſo uprightly under the conduct of this grace, it can neither bring him to heaven, nor procure ſaving grace for him. What encouragement is this to the greateſt part of mankind, even amongſt Chriſtians, who are ſaid to live under no other influences than thoſe of common grace?

Dio. We are confident that ſuch as are truly ſanctified, can never fall totally and finally: As for thoſe other falling ſtars, how glorious ſoever their luſtre was, we know they were never fixed in the firmament.

Deso. Whatever your confidence is, Sir, ſuch examples make ſo great an impreſſion upon my ſpirit, I cannot but with trembling reflect upon that apoſtolical caveat and exhortation—"Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.[†]"

Dio. God hath ordained ſuch admonition as a means to promote the grace of perſeverance in all that are true believers.

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[*] It is not from the mere nature of inherent grace that it cannot be loſt; but from the Divine decree, love and engagement.---*Mr. Baxter of Saving Faith*, p. 49.

[†] 1 Cor. x. 12.

Deso. But that I am one of that number, is not yet made out to me; for there is nothing can really make me ſuch, but that ſpecial irreſiſtible grace that flows from the fountain of an abſolute election, as the fruit and effect of it, as the Synod of Dort declareth. And unleſs I be planted in that ſoil by God's moſt free and unchangeable love, it is impoſſible I ſhould partake of the fatneſs of it*. And this is my unhappineſs, I cannot meet a man that hath taken ſo exact a ſurvey of that ſtate, as to be able to ſecure my intereſt therein. The truth is therefore, after all your applications to remove my jealouſy, I am ſtill as much afraid of the ſtate of reprobation as at our firſt meeting.

Dio. The Synod of Dort † tells us—" That they who heartily deſire to turn unto God, to pleaſe him only, and to be delivered from this body of death, though they cannot make ſuch a progreſs in the faith and way of godlineſs as they wiſh; yet they ought not to be terrified with the doctrine of Reprobation; for our merciful God hath promiſed that he will not *quench the ſmoaking flax*, nor *break the ſhaken reed.*

Deso. He that can *quench* ‡ the Spirit, may *quench* the *ſmoaking flax*, though God doth not. In this matter I am not afraid of God, but of myſelf; and that in regard of the decree of reprobation, which denies all grace ſufficient to ſet the *flax* on *fire*, though it *ſmoaks* till it makes the heart to bleed, as well as the eyes to water.

Dio. If you be afraid of your own infirmities, I hope you have ſufficient ſecurity againſt them, in the interceſſion of a merciful and compaſſionate High-Prieſt; who implied all, when he ſpake to Peter, and made him this promiſe:—" § Simon,

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* Ch. 1. Art. 9. † Ch. 1. Art. 16. ‡ 1 Theſ. v. 19. § Luke xxii. 31, 32.

Simon, behold Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

DESO. Alas, Sir, that concerns the elect*, who are the only perſons that have an intereſt in that High-Prieſt; for we are told, in the name of all the Congregational Churches, That (though the reprobates were then in Adam's loins as well as the reſt) "God was pleaſed to give the promiſe of Chriſt, the ſeed of the woman, to the elect" (only.) And that his interceſſion belongs peculiarly unto them, is the affirmation of many of the members of the Synod of Dort; and as touching the efficacy of it, it is the ſenſe of that whole convention. Beſides, that promiſe concerns the true believers, and ſo no ground of comfort to ſuch as want a true goſpel-faith for the morality of it. But grant that I have an intereſt in Chriſt ſo far forth as concerns the impetration of grace, *that is*, of pardon and ſalvation upon this condition, "If I repent and believe†;" (as Martinius and Ludovicus Crocius do acknowledge, becauſe they ſaw the glory of God, his veracity in calling, his equity in commanding, his juſtice in threatening, could not be defended otherwiſe) yet, if I have no intereſt in his merit and interceſſion, as to the application of it, *that is*, for procuring grace ſufficient and neceſſary unto the begetting of that faith and repentance, (as they ſay reprobates have not) what will it avail me?

DIO. That impetration being made for all in general, as the greateſt divines do confeſs, (to whoſe judgment I muſt ſubſcribe, for many weighty reaſons);

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[*] Chriſt profeſſeth he prayeth not for all, but only for thoſe whom God had given him, John xvii. 9. or ſhould hereafter believe, *ver.* 20. and for them alone he ſanctified himſelf, *ver.* 19. *that is*, offered himſelf upon the croſs.---*Dr. Twiſs. Ibid.* p. 143.

[†] Vid. Act. Syn. Dord. Par. II. p. 4. theſ. 7, &c. and p. 117, theſ. 2, 3, 4.

the application you know is to be accompliſhed by means. What the ordinary means is, you are not ignorant; you muſt attend upon that, and wait the good hour with patience; you have many comfortable expreſſions for your encouragement: Chriſt came *to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.* If you be amongſt that number, and ſenſible of your loſt condition, you have encouragement from that paſſage, *Chriſt came not to call the righteous, but* (ſuch loſt perſons) *ſinners to repentance.*

Deso. That I am amongſt the number of thoſe loſt ſouls, I am ſenſible; but that Chriſt came intentionally to ſeek and ſave me, is not ſo evident: yet I have been taught to believe, that he came to ſave all, upon conditions; *that is,* if they repent and believe.

Dio. And not only ſo, but he hath appointed a miniſtry to make a general offer of Chriſt, pardon and ſalvation upon that condition; and to call upon them ſeriouſly and earneſtly to perform it; *that is,* to repent and believe, that they may actually receive forgiveneſs of their ſins, and an inheritance among them that are ſanctified*.

Deso. It is ſomewhat ſtrange how he ſhould ſeriouſly offer life and pardon, or ſeriouſly call to faith and repentance, ſuch perſons as he was pleaſed, for the glory of his ſovereign power, to decree from all eternity, to with-hold his mercy from, to paſs them by, (in the decree of communicating grace ſufficient and neceſſary to faith and repentance, and to permit them efficaciouſly to fall into ſin) and to ordain them to diſhonour and wrath for their ſin, to the praiſe of his glorious juſtice, as the Congregational Churches have declared*. How can it conſiſt, I ſay, with God's ſincerity, equity and juſtice, to call, command and threaten unto faith and repentance, upon promiſe of pardon and ſalvation, thoſe very perſons, whom his own immutable and everlaſting decree hath put under an inevitable neceſſity of impenitency and unbelief, that he may have an opportunity to glorify his juſtice in their eternal condemnation? A dejected ſoul cannot caſt anchor upon ſuch deluding offers and invitations.

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* The Reader will all along obſerve, that Diotrephes repreſents one of thoſe inconſiſtent Calviniſtic miniſters, who often make uſe of Arminian arguments, when preaching to a mixed multitude; or, according to the common obſervation, one of thoſe who finiſh a Calviniſtic ſermon with an Arminian concluſion.

I ſhall therefore trouble you no further, good Mr. *Diotrephes*, but ſum up the grounds of my preſent doubts and diſconſolation, and leave them to be more deliberately weighed in the balance of your mature judgment.

1. It is moſt certain that there is no man ſhall be ſaved without regeneration.

2. It is reſolved, do a man what he can to the uttermoſt, in the improvement of common grace; yet there is no promiſe extant to aſſure him, that ſpecial grace ſhall be conferred upon him; but only,

3. Certain revelations, that this work of regeneration ſhall be accompliſhed irreſiſtibly, in a ſet number of perſons called the *elect*. And

4. Becauſe thoſe perſons are deſigned and culled out already, without reſpect or foreknowledge, whether of faith or repentance, or any good quality whatſoever in them, as antecedent to their election; therefore, I am ſure no performance of mine can procure me to be elected.

5. It is impoſſible, upon theſe grounds, to come to the knowledge of it *a priori*, whether I be elected or no, without ſuch a ſpecial revelation as is granted very ſeldom, and, if ever, to very few.

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* Chap, iii. n. 7. See chap. v. n. 4. The doctrine of the Aſſembly, and that of Dort, differ but little from this in effect, though it be ſomewhat more plauſible in appearance.

6. It is ſo difficult likewiſe to collect any certainty, *a poſteriori*, the ſins and duties of the elect and reprobate are ſo ſymbolical and alike: The *firſt*, (their *ſins*) proceeding from the common infirmity and corruption of nature, which hath infected all: And the *ſecond*, (their *duties*) being the effects of that grace, (common or ſpecial reſpectively)which, whatever it be in the political or moral capacity, is but gradually diſtinguiſhed in the phyſical or natural; and eſpecially, ſeeing that degree of grace which is ſaving in one, perhaps is not ſo in another.

7. We obſerve, even in the pureſt times, while the holy apoſtles (thoſe foundations[*] of the New Jeruſalem) were yet alive, that many who ſhined as glorious ſtars in that firmament, were, notwithſtanding, *drawn out of heaven by the tail of the red dragon, and caſt down to the earth*[†]; which event (as we are taught to believe) is a ſufficient indication they never had a real intereſt in Chriſt's merits and interceſſion, to procure *ſaving* grace for them; and for abuſing that *common* grace, which had advanced them ſo high, (though higher it was not able) they were caſt ſo much the lower, into ſhame and torments.

Laſtly, This abſolute election being, (as ſome of the Synod at Dort affirm[‡]) "the foundation of Chriſtianity and ſalvation, and the root or fountain of ſolid conſolation in this miſerable life[§]," and myſelf not being able to make out my intereſt in it; but finding much objection to the contrary: *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*: It ſeems, for all ſuch *miſerable comforters*[‖], and *phyſicians of no value*[¶], I muſt ſit down in my confuſion by theſe waters of Babylon, and weep bitterly.

LAM. i. 16.— *For theſe things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water; becauſe the Comforter that ſhould relieve* (or bring back) *my ſoul, is far from me.*

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[*] Rev. xxi. 14.
[†] Rev. xii. 4.
[‡] Dep. Syn. Geld. Act. Syn. Dord. p. 30 par. 3.
[§] Suffrag. Genev. Ib. p. 57. par. 2.
[‖] Job xvi. 2.
[¶] Chap. xiii. 4.

THE SYLLOGISM.

THAT doctrine that can afford no ſolid ground of hope to encourage a *deſolate* ſpirit in the ways of godlineſs; that doctrine is not ſerviceable to the intereſt of ſouls, nor practicable in the exerciſe of the miniſterial function, not according to godlineſs.

The doctrine, as well of the Sublapſarians, as that of the Supralapſarians, can afford no ſolid grounds of hope to encourage a deſolate ſpirit in the ways of godlineſs. Therefore,

The doctrine, as well of the Sublapſarians as the Supralapſarians, is not ſerviceable to the intereſt of ſouls, nor practicable in the exerciſe of the miniſterial function, nor according to godlineſs.

The *Major* is evident; becauſe it is for the intereſt of ſouls to be *filled with all joy and peace in believing*, and *to rejoice in hope of the glory of God*; and therefore it is a part of the miniſter's duty to be *helpers of the people's joy*, that they may *ſerve God with gladneſs of heart*: Rom. v. 2. xiv. 17. and xv. 13.—2 Cor. i. 24.—Deut. xxviii. 47.

The *Minor* is proved in this fifth Dialogue*.

COLASTERION.

EZEK. xiii. 22, 23.—*Ye have made the heart of the righteous ſad, whom I have not made ſad; and ſtrengthened the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way.—Therefore, ye ſhall ſee no more vanity.*

OTHER PROOFS OF THE MINOR.

Although none are ſavingly enlightened in the Truth, nor know any thing of the power of the Goſpel, but thoſe who are pre-ordained to Salvation; yet experience ſhews, the Reprobates, ſometimes, are almoſt equally affected with the Elect, ſo as not to differ in *judgment* at all from them. Wherefore, nothing of an abſurd taſte as to the heavenly gifts, mentioned Heb. vi. 4. is aſcribed to them by the apoſtle; nay, temporary faith from Chriſt, is aſcribed to them. Not that they ſolidly perceive the power of ſpiritual grace, and the clear light of faith; but becauſe the Lord (to render them more condemned and inexcuſeable) may inſinuate himſelf into the minds of theſe: ſince his goodneſs cannot be taſted without the Spirit of Adoption.—CALVIN's *Inſtitutes, Book III. Chap. xi. Sect.* 11.

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* Read alſo the Relation of the fearful Eſtate of *Francis Spira*.

AND now, Reader, I appeal to all the world for judgment, whether men that have eſpouſed ſuch principles, be not likely to march out upon a very hopeful expedition, in their enterprize for *Reformation*, while they continue ſuch forces under their regiment, as are ſo apt upon all occaſions to face about, and give fire upon themſelves, inſtead of aiding them to carry on the war againſt Vice and Wickedneſs? They may *magiſterially* dictate their preſcriptions for a *form of godlineſs*; but doubtleſs, in the profeſſion of theſe principles, they do ſhamefully evacuate, if not utterly deny the power thereof.

But ſome man may demand, If theſe doctrines be ſo pernicious unto godlineſs, what is the reaſon that ſuch as do embrace them, do not run headlong after their unbridled luſts, into all manner of wickedneſs? To which I anſwer——

1. That doubtleſs too many do take liberty to pollute themſelves with the fouleſt ſins, and flatter themſelves that they ſhall be ſaved harmleſs upon the account of theſe doctrines.

2. Some diſſemble their crimes for other advantages, or excuſe*, or extenuate, or adopt them into the family of Virtue. Did not Mr. KNOX call it a godly fact in *James Melvin*, when he murdered the archbiſhop of *St. Andrews?* And do not others now-adays account ſuch facts the work of God, and a doing God ſervice†, as well as Mr. KNOX?

3. Men may be very reſolute to do and ſuffer much, to gratify the pride of their opinion. *Maccovius* ‡ mentions one *Luciolus* in France, who ſuffered to be burnt for *Atheiſm*.

4. There are many (and God be bleſſed there are ſo many) that lead a very godly life, not diſ-

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* *Quere*-- Whether men of thoſe rigid opinions, do think all thoſe ſins mentioned in the apoſtle's catalogue, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. to be damnable, and make a like conſcience to avoid them all?

† John xvi. 2.

‡ De Atheis. in Corol.

cerning the pernicious conſequences of thoſe doctrines which they do maintain.

And, 5. As *Cicero* writeth of the diſciples of *Epicurus*, ſo I may ſay of theſe—It is not the genius of their doctrine, but the honeſty of their nature, and the goads of conſcience, that do prompt and incite them to a good life. To which I may add,

6. The power of ſome other principles, whereby the Divine grace doth act in them.

Laſtly. If they of another perſuaſion can clearly and ſolidly defend the honour of the Divine Attributes; *viz.* God's *mercy* and *juſtice*, his *holineſs*, *truth* and *ſincerity*; and juſtify the *neceſſity*, *uſe* and *exercise* of the *miniſterial* office upon their own grounds, I do unfeignedly promiſe to ſubſcribe: But if they be not able to perform this, then, as *Vincentius Lirinenſis* hath it—"May they well learn, what they have not well learnt; and may they receive from the whole ſuffrage of the Church, what they are capable of; and what they cannot underſtand, let them believe."

DIALOGUE VI.

CALVINISM A SCOURGE TO THE DISCONSOLATE, AND AN ARREST OF COMFORT.

SAMARITANUS and DESOLATUS.

SAMARITANUS. HOW now, my *Deſolatus !*—What, ſolitary ſtill ?—Hath Mr. *Diotrephes* left you alone ?

DESOLATUS. All alone, Sir ; to myſelf, and my own ſad thoughts.

SAMAR. I hope he hath left you ſatisfaction behind him, and then he might take his leave with confidence.

DESO. Yes, he hath given me ſatisfaction ; and I thank him for his labour.

SAMAR. I am very glad of that. But why ſo penſive and dejected ſtill, if you have received ſatisfaction ?

DESO. I perceive his doctrine contains no cordial of hope for one in my condition ; that is all the ſatisfaction I have gained : and ſure you muſt needs think there is but cold comfort in that.

SAMAR. Whatever his application has been, I know it is impoſſible the Father of Mercies ſhould be defective in his proviſions for healing the ſad and broken ſoul : for he ſaith—" To this man will I look ; even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word*." And to what end doth he look to perſons of this frame and temper of ſpirit ; but " to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones †?" In confidence, therefore, of his compaſſion towards you, and his aſſiſtance to myſelf in this charitable enterprize, I deſire to renew my diſcourſe with you, in order to your better ſatisfaction and comfort.

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* Iſai. lxv 2.

† Ib. Chap. xvii. 15.

And let me tell you, as the ground-work from Mr. Baxter*—"That all the terrifying temptations which are grounded on miſrepreſentations of God, (as if he were a cruel deſtroyer to be fled from) are diſpelled by the due conſideration of his goodneſs, and the deep-ſettled apprehenſions of his gracious, merciful, lovely nature; which, indeed, is the firſt work of true religion, and the very maſter-radical act of true grace, and the maintainer of ſpiritual life and motion†. If you think of God as one that is glad of all advantages againſt you, and delighteth in his creature's miſery, it is impoſſible you ſhould love him. The love of ourſelves is ſo deeply rooted in us, that we cannot lay it by, nor love any thing that is abſolutely and directly againſt us. We conceive of the devil as an abſolute enemy to God and men, and one that ſeeks our deſtruction, and therefore we cannot love him. And the great cauſe why troubled ſouls do love God no more, is, becauſe they repreſent him to themſelves in an ugly odious ſhape. To think of God as one that ſeeks and delighteth in man's ruin, is to make him as the devil; and then what wonder, if inſtead of loving him, and delighting in him, you tremble at the thoughts of him, and fly from him! As I have obſerved children, when they have ſeen the devil painted on a wall, in an ugly ſhape, they have partly feared, and partly hated it. If you do ſo by God in your fancy, it is not putting the name of God on him when you have done, that will reconcile your affections to him, as long as you ſtrip him of his Divine nature. Remember the Holy Ghoſt's deſcription of God, 1 John iv. 16.—*God is love.* Write theſe words deep in your underſtanding."

Deso. Sir, were the author you have cited preſent with me, I would deſire him to reſolve me how he could demonſtrate it that *God is love*, (as he hath deſcribed him) to the Reprobates; when he hath from all eternity abandoned them to ſin and hell torments, for his mere pleaſure, or to ſhew his ſovereign authority and power over them? But you may be pleaſed to proceed in your own method of diſcourſing.

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* Directions for Peace of Conſcience, Dir. 7. p. 46. † Ib. p. 18, 19.

SAMAR. I doubt not to ſatisfy you in this particular, before we part. But I ſhall purſue that encouraging obſervation of St. Peter, where I left you at our laſt conference—"That God is no reſpecter of perſons*," &c. To which you made me no anſwer; and ſo I thought fit to withdraw myſelf from you.

DESO. I remember very well the paſſage; for Mr. *Diotrephes* was pleaſed to revive the memory of it; but as little to his purpoſe as to my comfort: for (as I told him) Interpreters do put in ſuch exceptions in their conſtruction of that text, that it ſignifies nothing at all to my advantage. God, it ſeems, hath culled out a ſet number of perſons, without regard to any good quality in them, upon whom he hath immutably decreed to confer his grace; and they ſhall be inſuperably conducted into glory: for all the reſt, (who make up the far greater number) not a whit worſe than thoſe, he hath paſſed them over, and decreed to give them neither grace nor glory; but to let them fall (and that not by a bare permiſſion) into ſin, and to leave them in that ſin to their final condemnation; and this for the glory of his ſovereign power over his creatures. If I be not of that ſet number, (do what I will or can) I ſhall find no acceptation at the hands of Almighty God.

SAMAR. Can you be induced to ſubſcribe to ſuch interpretations of Scripture? You may with as much colour of reaſon ſay, That when our Saviour commands us, when we pray, to ſay, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. his meaning is, we ſhould not ſay it at all; or when the apoſtle ſaith, *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers*, that his meaning is, we ſhould take up arms againſt them. St. Peter's ſenſe is clear enough, that God's reſpect is not ſo much to the naked entities, or beings of men, as to their perſons, ſo capacitated or qualified: "He that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him: "To this man will I look*," ſaith the High and Lofty One, as you heard even now. To this purpoſe the Lord, in his expoſtulation with Cain, ſaith, "If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted†?" *that is*, without doubt thou ſhalt.

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* Acts x. 34, 35.

Deso. But the Scriptures do aſſure us, that *God loveth firſt*, and maketh himſelf known to thoſe that make no inquiſition after him‡; and without Chriſt, and his grace, man can can do nothing §.

Samar. You ſay the very truth; "the God of our mercy doth prevent us," as the Pſalmiſt hath it: But the love of God is exhibited to us in Holy Scripture two manner of ways; either as antecedent, which goes before faith and repentance, or as conſequent, which follows the obedience of faith. God bears a general good-will to mankind, before he loves them with a love of complacency; and out of that love of good-will, tho' he doth not grant them ſalvation immediately, yet he affords them light and means to lead them to ſalvation. This love is ſo great, that the apoſtle ſaith of it—"God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us ‖." It was through the bowels of the mercy¶ of our God, *that* this day-ſpring from on high did thus viſit us. But upon the intervention of our faith, when we entertain this light, and receive Chriſt into our hearts, there follows a love of complacency in God towards us,

* Iſai. lxvi. 2. † Gen. iv. 7. ‡ Rom. x. 20. § John xv. 5.
‖ Rom. v. 8. ¶ Luke i. 78.

which embraceth us, as in the neighbourhood of ſalvation. — Of this love our Saviour ſpeaketh, John xiv. 23. "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Deso. But the diſpoſal of men, as to their final ſtate of ſalvation or damnation; the apoſtle makes it an act of God's ſovereign power, Rom. ix. 21. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour?"

Samar. The wiſe man (whoever he was that wrote that book) tells us of the potter—That *employing his labours lewdly, he maketh a vain god of the ſame clay**. Sure God cannot do ſo; ſimilitudes, therefore, muſt not be ſtretched too far. But ſuppoſe the potter could give life and ſenſe to his veſſels, and perpetuate that life to millions of ages; ſhould he, merely to ſhew his ſovereign power over them, inflict inceſſant and exceſſive torments upon them; what opinion would you have of ſuch a man? Would you not think it an act of extreme cruelty, contrary to that natural love which every creature beareth towards its own production; and contrary to natural equity, thus to torment the harmleſs?

Deso. I muſt confeſs I could have no good opinion of ſuch a perſon in ſuch a caſe, for exerciſing ſo much inhumanity.

Samar. If this were God's practice, a man might juſtify himſelf upon the account of ſuch a precedent. It could be no ſin for a man (in ſuch a caſe) to follow God's example in diſpoſing of his own. But God, as his own moſt gracious† nature abhors it, ſo his law forbids all ſuch intolerable cruelty: And as a good man regardeth the life of his beaſt‡, ſo doth our good God too: But unto men he is *a faithful Creator*, 1 Pet. iv. 19. "Who will have all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim. ii. 4. Not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance; the end and means too, *ſalvation* and *repentance*: And extendeth the "riches* of his goodneſs and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, to lead them to it:" And that by *two immutable things*†, in which it is impoſſible for God to lie, we may have a ſtrong conſolation, in flying for refuge to lay hold of the hope ſet before us, he hath confirmed his promiſe by an oath, Ezek. xxxiii. 11.—"As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?" God's goodneſs or equity makes him "have a deſire to the work of his own hands‡." It is the extreme provocation and incorrigible obſtinacy of ſinners, that makes the prophet denounce ſuch a fearful doom againſt ſome of them, Iſai. xxvii. 11.—"For it is a people of no underſtanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them, will ſhew them no favour."

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* Wiſd. xv. 8. † Micah vii. 18. ‡ Prov. xii. 10.

DESO. Doth God caſt off none but ſuch as caſt off him firſt, and deſpiſe his goodneſs§?

SAMAR. Not a man that I can find, according to the Holy Scriptures; for ſo the Lord hath declared himſelf.

(1.) In the *Old Teſtament*, Prov. i. 24———31. "Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed; I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have ſet at naught all my counſel, and would none of my reproof; I alſo will laugh at your calamity," &c. And to the ſame purpoſe, Ezek. xxiv. 13.—"In thy filthineſs is lewdneſs: becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, 'till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee."

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* Rom. ix. 23. with chap. ii. 4.

† Heb. vi. 18.

‡ Job xiv. 15.

§ See 2 Kings xiii. 23.

(2.) In the *New Teſtament**, Acts xiii. 26. The apoſtle addreſſeth his miniſtry unto them in theſe expreſſions :—" Men and brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent." And he gives them warning, *ver*. 40, 41. " Beware therefore, leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of in the prophets ; Behold ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh :" and becauſe they did deſpiſe, contradict and blaſpheme the goſpel, and " reject† the counſel of God againſt themſelves ;" therefore the apoſtle took the boldneſs to tell them, *ver*. 46.— " It was neceſſary that the Word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you ; but ſeeing ye put it from you, and judge yourſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles." The *talent* is never taken away, 'till it be firſt abuſed, or at leaſt neglected : Hence Heb. ii. 3.—" How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation ?" Reprobation is therefore thus defined by the learned and orthodox : [God's immutable decree, whereby he hath determined to leave them under wrath, for their ſins and unbelief ; and to damn them eternally, who will not repent, and believe in Chriſt.] This definition is exactly true, if God reprobates ſuch only as he damns ; (and if he doth otherwiſe, there is not an exact conformity betwixt his decree and the execution of it ; which is abſurd) and the Scriptures expreſs it in every page‡: But eſpecially we may take it from the words of our Saviour Chriſt, John iii. 18, 19.—" He that believeth not, is condemned already; *becauſe* he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the *cauſe of* condemnation; that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil." In which words, we have not only the way, but the cauſe alſo of condemnation propounded; *viz.* unbelief and the love of darkneſs, proceding from a cuſtom of evil-doing.

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* That the diſpleaſure of God is only againſt the refractory and diſobedient, ſee Heb. x. 38.---1 Cor. x. 5.---Heb. iii. 17, 18, 19.

† Luke vii. 30.

‡ See Mark xvi. 16.---John iii. 36---Acts xiii. 46.---Rom. xi. 20.

DESO. My friend, I am afraid you forget yourſelf in this point; for you know divines do diſtinguiſh here, and make a wide difference between the decree of reprobation and the execution of it. Although (ſay they) God doth deſtine whomſoever he pleaſes to hatred and deſtruction, without any reſpect to any quality in them; yet he is not unjuſt: becauſe betwixt his eternal decree and the execution of it, ſin and infidelity are ſubordinated, as the cauſe for which he juſtly damns them.

SAMAR. I remember this diſtinction very well; but I cannot allow it for current, becauſe it doth not free God from injuſtice: for if the execution be therefore juſt, becauſe it ſuppoſeth a cauſe or ground for the infliction of that evil upon man, which was deſtinated to him by the decree; the decree therefore, for the infliction of that evil, is unjuſt, becauſe that excludes ſuch cauſe or ground: for if it be not lawful to inflict evil without cauſe, neither is it lawful to will the infliction of it; for the injuſtice, we know, is not firſt and principally in the infliction, but in the will to inflict; for rectitude is, *primo et per ſe*, in itſelf firſt and chiefly in the will, in the execution only by extrinſical denomination. But, 2. If there be ſuch a diverſity in the execution from the decree, this execution is not the execution of that decree, but ſomething elſe, as was intimated before. Beſides, how is ſin ſubordinated to that decree, and by whom? Is it by Almighty God?

Why then, (whether that ſubordination be a poſitive or privative action) that ſin is intended of God, as a means inſervient to that execution; and this will double the injuſtice of it: for what is this elſe, but firſt to will that a harmleſs perſon be made miſerable, and then to will that he be made a ſinner, that he may be made miſerable, as it were, in a way of juſtice: And far be it from us to aſcribe ſuch proceedings to the righteous Judge of all the world.

Deso. If this be all the account you can give of the decree of reprobation, I pray, what will you make that power and liberty to conſiſt in, which the apoſtle doth aſſign to Almighty God, in the act of election and reprobation, under that ſimilitude of a *potter?*

Samar. A liberty to diſpoſe of the ſame lump, for ſeveral ends and uſes, as he finds it more ſtubborn or pliant under his hand upon a ſecond working: for we muſt conceive the apoſtle ſpeaks of ſuch a lump of clay as was firſt marred in the hands of the potter: (Jer. xviii. 4.*) Hence he concludes, that all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God†: Sinned, I ſay, not in the loins of Adam only, but perſonally and actually; for he ſaith—"‡ They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one." Now in the diſpoſal of this lump, God declares his power and ſovereignty.

(1.) By aſſigning glory to ſome part of it; *that is*, to believers: (for *it pleaſed God to ſave them that believe*, 1 Cor. i. 21. and this is *the election of grace*, Rom. xi. 5.) And,

(2.) By awarding ſhame and deſtruction to others: *viz.* unbelievers; (who are therefore ſaid to be *broken off*, *becauſe of unbelief*, Rom. xi. 20.) And this is exactly conſonant to the reſolution of our Saviour, to whoſe hands the regiment of the church is committed, John iii. 35, 36.—"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." And indeed this is the very key that the apoſtle hath put into our hands, to open his meaning in thoſe chapters to the Romans, *chap.* ix. xxx. xxxi.—"What ſhall we ſay then? (or *what ſhall we conclude?)* That the Gentiles which followed not after righteouſneſs, have attained to righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs which is of faith: but Iſrael, which followed after the law of righteouſneſs, hath not attained to the law of righteouſneſs: Wherefore? Becauſe they ſought it not by faith," &c.

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* Read that chapter throughout. † Rom. iii. 23. ‡ Ver. 12.

DESO. The apoſtle, ſpeaking of the *elect*, ſaith—"God *hath* predeſtinated them unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt, according to the purpoſe *and* good pleaſure *of himſelf*, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will," Eph. i. 5. 11. where he attributes the election and adoption of ſuch perſons to God's mere good pleaſure, purpoſe, and the counſel of his own will; and the counſel of God *that* ſhall ſtand.

SAMAR. To ſatisfy you in this, there is no more to be conſidered, but wherein this good pleaſure, purpoſe and counſel of God conſiſts; and it is in this—That whereas mankind was enthralled to Satan, ſin and death, Chriſt (eſtabliſhed to be a Mediator and Saviour, in the execution of thoſe offices of King, Prieſt, and Prophet) had commiſſion to proclaim a great ſpiritual jubilee for the liberty and ſalvation of as many as were willing, upon his terms, to accept of their redemption. To this purpoſe, you may, at your leiſure, conſult theſe Scriptures—Iſai.

xlii. 1, 2, 3, 4. 6, 7. xlix. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. lxi. 1, 2, 3. and Zach. vi. 12, 13. Hence the apoſtle ſaith—“ There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus,” Rom. viii. 1. and Col. i. 27. “ Chriſt in you the hope of glory :” And becauſe the terms which Chriſt propounds, or the condition which he requires of us, in order to our actual liberty and redemption, is ſaith, (in the goſpel ſenſe*) ; therefore the ſame apoſtle ſaith—“ Ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus,” Gal. iii. 26. For “ as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name,” John i. 12. Who are therefore ſaid to be choſen in him, Eph. i. 4. But, on the other ſide, ſuch as deſpiſe the benefit of this jubilee, or acceptable year, and will not have Chriſt to reign over them ; but being fond of their old maſter and ſervice, continue in the obedience of his laws and luſts ; they ſhall die and periſh in their thraldom : Exod. xxi. 5, 6.—Rom. vi. 16.—2 Pet. ii. 19.—Luke xix. 14, with 27. This is clearly God's whole pleaſure, purpoſe, and counſel, in the Goſpel ; and this ſhall ſtand. Whereupon the apoſtle ſaith—“ If an angel from heaven preacheth any other, let him be accurſed †.”

Deso. What will you ſay to that of the apoſtle aſcribing all to God's will, Rom. ix. 18.—“ Therefore hath he mercy, on whom he will have mercy ; and whom he will, he hardeneth ?”

Samar. I ſhall not inſiſt to tell you in what ſenſe God is ſaid to harden ; it will be ſufficient to enquire a little further into God's will in theſe particulars, (of ſhewing mercy and hardening reſpectively). And (as was declared even now) it is God's abſolute will to have mercy upon believers, as ſuch ;

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* See and compare theſe three parallel texts ; Gal. v. 6. 1 Cor. vii. 19. Gal. vi. 15.

† Gal. i. 8.

and to harden unbelievers, as ſuch. So the apoſtle, Rom. xi. 7.—" What then? Iſrael hath not obtained that which he ſeeketh for; but the election (*that is*, believers, repreſented by thoſe who had not *bowed the knee to Baal*, ver. 4.) hath obtained it (mercy and juſtification unto life): and the reſt (unbelievers, who going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, did not ſubmit themſelves to the righteouſneſs of God," *chap.* x. 3. The righteouſneſs which is of God through the faith of Chriſt, as it is ſtiled, Phil. iii. 9. Theſe) were *blinded*, or *hardened*." See Rom. ix. 30, 31, 32.

Deso. But foraſmuch as faith is a work, (as our Saviour witneſſeth, John vi. 29.) the apoſtle ſeems to exclude that utterly, in this election of grace: For he argues thus, Rom. xi. 6.—" If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwiſe work is no more work."

Samar. You muſt obſerve, that though grace and works be oppoſed*; yet grace and faith are ſubordinated in the goſpel, Rom. iv. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace. Eph. ii. 8, 9.—" For by grace are ye ſaved, through faith; and that not of yourſelves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt." And what is it that is ſaid to exclude works, but that which excludes boaſting too? which is faith, Rom. iii. 27. Now, as the apoſtle ſaith in another caſe, 1 Cor. xv. 27.—" When he ſaith, All things are put under him, it is manifeſt that he is excepted which did put all things under him." So here; when the apoſtle ſaith works are excluded, it is manifeſt that faith is excepted, which did exclude them. And hereupon we are ſaid to be ſaved by faith, to be juſtified by faith, to be adopted[*] by faith; and to be choſen in Chriſt[†] too; in whom we cannot be but by faith[‡]. Hence the apoſtle uſeth that title —"To the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus," Eph. i. 1. For "We are made partakers of Chriſt, if we hold the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end;" Heb. iii. 14. See 1 Tim. ii. 15. and Rom. xi. 20, with 22.

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* *Viz.* Such as go before faith; as Tit. iii. 3. 4, 5. and ſuch as pretend to reward upon the integrity of their perfection, Rom. iv. 4. Not ſuch as flow from faith; James ii. 14. 26. 1 John iii. 7. for faith doth eſtabliſh grace, Rom. iv. 16.

Deso. I have yet more to object out of the apoſtle: who ſaith, Rom. ix. 16. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy." And in the next verſe he adds a moſt dreadful example of God's ſeverity and judgment upon Pharaoh; of whom the Scripture, as the mouth of God, ſaith—"Even for the ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth."

Samar. That raiſing up of Pharaoh is not to be underſtood of his creation, or birth; as if God brought him forth into the world on purpoſe to make him a ſpectacle of his wrath and fury; (for the word the apoſtle uſeth hath no ſuch importance) but of raiſing him up from the gates of death, reſcuing him from that deſtruction by the peſtilence, which (his meaſure of ſin being then filled up) had ſeized upon him, had not God reſerved him, by a ſpecial power, to ſerve other ends of his providence. The original text hath it clearly in this ſenſe; for ſo it runs: (Exod. ix. 16.) "And in very deed, for this cauſe I have made thee to ſtand §, for to ſhew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth:" which, we ſee, was accordingly accompliſhed; not only amongſt the ſurviving Egyptians, (Exod. xiv. 17, 18.) but amongſt the Philiſtines alſo, (1 Sam. vi. 6.) and other nations.

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[*] John i. 12. Gal. iii. 26. [†] Eph. i. 4. [‡] Eph. iii. 17.

§ See the marginal reading, according to the Hebrew.

When the apoſtle ſaith, (which is your other objection) “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth;”——

1. We are told by Mr. Baxter[*]—“That the meaning is not, that our ſalvation is not in him that willeth, or in him that runneth; the apoſtle talketh of no ſuch thing; but it is about the giving of the goſpel to them that had it not, and taking it from them that had forfeited it by their ſin.” Indeed he ſpeaketh not of ſalvation or election unto glory; but of giving the goſpel, and calling men unto Chriſtianity, who were in no capacity, much leſs in any forwardneſs, to enquire after it, ’till they were prevented by the revelation and light thereof, as the apoſtle recites it from the prophet, Rom. x. 20.—“But Eſaias is very bold, and ſaith, I was found of them that ſought me not; I was made manifeſt unto them that aſked not after me.”

2. The apoſtle, in the place mentioned, ſpeaks of ſuch as *will* and *run* after their own phantaſies and humours, as the Jews did[†], againſt whoſe principles and practice he diſputeth—(For *who* had *required*[‡] *theſe things* (to which they addicted themſelves under the goſpel) *at their hands?*

But, 3. That God ſhews mercy unto ſalvation to none, (I ſpeak of the *adult*) but ſuch as do both *will* and *run*, according to his own preſcription in the goſpel, is every where apparent. To this purpoſe are thoſe exhortations: Heb. xii. 1.—“Run with patience the race that is ſet before you:” 1 Cor. ix. 24.—“So run that ye may obtain.” And ſuch as deſiſt, faint, or ſtep aſide in the courſe of Chriſtianity, are reprehended for it, Gal. v. 7.—“Ye did run well; who did drive you back, that ye ſhould not obey the truth?” There is the ſame reaſon for

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[*] Treatiſe of Converſion, p. 295.---*Vid.* Diſſertat. Theologic, inter Ameſ. et Grevinch. p. 231.

[†] Rom. x. 3.

[‡] Iſai. i. 12.

willing, which the Scripture inculcates with no leſs importunity; inſomuch as it is ſaid—“ Whoſoever *will*, let him take of the water of life freely ;” and, “ If any man *will** do his *(God's)* will, he ſhall know.” And ſuch as remain in their unbelief are reproved upon this account, becauſe they would not come to Chriſt †, they would not be gathered‡ by Chriſt. If God's purpoſe were to ſhew mercy to us unto ſalvation, without our *willing* and *running*, (according to thoſe laws, and thoſe abilities, he hath been pleaſed to give us); why are we ſo earneſtly exhorted—“ to walk worthy of our calling; to give diligence to make our calling and election ſure; to work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling § ?”

Deso. But ſure there is ſomething more in it; elſe why does the apoſtle (diſcourſing upon this profound article) ſilence all objections with his *O homo, tu quis es?* “ || Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliеſt againſt God?” He reſolves the whole reaſon of the affair into the will of God, and will have us diſpute no further.

Samar. You muſt underſtand that exclamation, *O man, who art thou?* The apoſtle, out of indignation, doth uſe that expreſſion to repel the ſaucineſs of an inſolent replicant: For it is ſuch an one that is introduced in the former verſe, uttering theſe words:—“ Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath reſiſted his will?” This was enough to ſtop the mouth of ſuch a bold perſon; but not all the apoſtle had to ſay by way of anſwer: for he gives a clear deciſion of the point, *ver.* 30, 31, 32. Not according to that principle of an irreſpective election and reprobation; but upon the account of faith and unbelief reſpectively: For ſuch as were now rejected from the lot of God's people, were broken off becauſe of their *unbelief*; and ſuch as were elected to it, did ſtand by *faith*, Rom. xi. 20. And this is to be reſolved wholly into the arbitrement of God's will, who was freely pleaſed thus to determine and ordain touching the ſons of men—" That whoſoever believeth ſhould have eternal life: He that believeth not, ſhould be condemned," John iii. 16. 18. 36.

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* John vii. 17. † John v. 40. ‡ Matth. xxiii. 37.
§ Eph. iv. 1. 2 Pet. i. 10. Phil. ii. 12. || Rom. ix. 20.

So that if you aſk the cauſe of this conſtitution, it is the ſole will of God: Therefore he choſe Peter and Paul, &c. whom he foreſaw would believe; becauſe, out of the mere pleaſure of his gracious will, he would ſave believers: He reprobated the Jews, whom he foreſaw would not believe; becauſe, according to the pleaſure of his own will, he determined to condemn unbelievers. The preſcription of faith unto ſalvation, is therefore of the free-will of God alone, who did ſo appoint it.

Deso. I have been taught, that we are choſen to ſalvation and glory, not as holy or believers; but to the end we may be made ſuch. Our election doth not preſuppoſe faith or holineſs in us, but procures them for us; according to that of the apoſtle, Eph. i. 4.—" He hath choſen us in Chriſt before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love." And the ſame apoſtle tells us, That *all men have not faith**; and he makes faith a propriety, calling it, *the faith of God's elect* †.

Samar. We may conſider a two-fold election; one to *grace*, another to *glory*: But the more profoundedly learned have obſerved, that throughout the whole book of Scripture, there is not one ſingle text, wherein the word *election*, or *choſen*, ſignifies, without controverſy, *election*, or *choſen unto glory*. And becauſe in that of Eph. i. 4. the apoſtle ſaith, " God hath choſen us in Chriſt, *and* that we ſhould be holy;" they think it moſt agreeable to interpret it of God's "chooſing us, through Chriſt, unto the ſtate of grace, to the end we may lead a holy life, to his praiſe and glory;" according to the 6th verſe. And becauſe it is ſaid, (in the præterperfect tenſe) "He hath choſen us before the foundation of the world;" therefore they underſtand it of God's decree of election, by a *metonymie* very frequent in Holy Scripture, which aſſigns the name of the *effect* to the *counſel* or *decree* itſelf; as you may further obſerve in thoſe texts—2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Eph. ii. 5, 6.

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* 2 Theſ. iii. 2. † Tit. i. 1.

Whereas you alledge out of the apoſtle, Tit. i. 1. That faith is appropriated to the elect: That, if rightly underſtood, is no ways oppoſite to our pretenſions; for by faith, in that place, we are not obliged, by any cogent argument, to underſtand faith properly ſo called, *fidemqua creditur*, the virtue of faith, whereby we do believe: but *metonymically*, that faith, *quæ creditur*; the doctrine of faith, which is believed: and thus it is to be underſtood, according to the uſual ſtile of Holy Scripture, as you may ſee in the 4th verſe of that very chapter, and Jude, *ver*. 3. Acts vi. 7. Rom. i. 5.

2. By the word *elect*, we are not bound to underſtand, in that place, ſuch perſons as were, from all eternity, choſen abſolutely, and by name, to glory. For that word [*elect*] is not always a participle, but ſometimes a noun; and ſuch a noun as doth, as well in the Old as New Teſtament, connote ſome excellent and remarkable quality, by reaſon whereof a thing is ſaid to be *elect*; as *elect* or choice trees, for their *tallneſs*, Jer. xxii. 7. Ezek. xxxi. 16.—*Elect* or choice men, for their *valour*, 1 Sam. xxvi. 2. Jer. xlviii. 15.—*Elect* or choice cities, for their *ſtrength* and *beauty*, 2 Kings iii. 19. And it is very agreeable to this ſenſe of the word to ſay, that men are called *elect*, or *choice men*, in regard of their *probity* of mind, and their *promptneſs* of aſſenting to the

revelation, and following the conduct of the goſpel; and the denomination of the elect of God, may be given unto them in regard of their conſtancy of faith, and their eminency of obedience amongſt the reſt of the faithful: To which purpoſe you may conſult thoſe texts of holy Scripture, Matth. xxiv. 31. Mark xiii. 27. Luke xviii. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 10. Rom. viii. 33. Col. iii. 12. Apoc. xvii. 14.

If by the elect in that place, you underſtand elect to glory, yet it doth not follow therefore, that they were ſo elected unto glory before they did believe. For then, by the ſame reaſon, it would follow, that ſanctity goes before faith, becauſe we read, Apoc. xiii. 10. "Here is the patience and faith of the ſaints;" and in St. Jude's Epiſtle, *ver.* 3. "Contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the ſaints." And we might conclude with equal authority, that vocation doth precede election, becauſe, Apoc. xvii. 14. they are ſaid to be *called and choſen, and faithful.* But by elect (in that place) we may underſtand ſuch as are elect to grace, or called unto the faith by a gracious divine election, and obey that call.

In ſhort then, the faith of God's elect may very well be expounded of the doctrine of faith, which was willingly embraced and entertained by ſuch as did yet retain the docile and honeſt heart, and ſo were choice men, and fearing God: But profane and perverſe, abſurd and unreaſonable men, are ſaid not to have that faith; becauſe they reject the counſel of God againſt themſelves, receive the grace of God in vain, and turn it into laſciviouſneſs.

Deso. It is Dr. Twiſs's obſervation, "*That a man may hear the word of God with a purpoſe to oppoſe it, either in general, or in ſome particular truth

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[*] *Ubi ſupra*, p. 84.

truth thereof. Yet this humour of oppoſition cannot hinder God's word, and the operation of his Spirit, where he will, in ſpite of their conceits, who thought the apoſtles were filled with new wine, when three thouſand were converted that day: and Auſtin acknowledgeth, that God converteth not only thoſe who are void of true faith, but thoſe who are averſe to it. We read in the viith of John, that ſome who were ſent to take Chriſt, were taken by him."

Samar. You muſt conſider that there may be more ſecret oppoſition in the heart, to the word of grace, upon the account of intereſt, prejudice, or falſe principles paſſionately eſpouſed, where the life is leſs ſcandalous, and the oppoſition is the more obſtinate, and conſequently, the more hard to be conquered according to the ground upon which it is made. "* How can ye believe (ſaith our Saviour to the Jews) who ſeek honour one of another?" And he tells the ſcribes and Phariſees, That the publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of heaven before them. And Soloman invites us to this obſervation, ſaying—" Seeſt thou a man that is wiſe in his own eyes, there is more hope of a fool (*that is*, a wicked man) than of him†."

The diſpenſation of the goſpel, which is the miniſtration of the Spirit, goes forth doubtleſs with a mighty power of conviction; but how far it works upon particular perſons affected under the influences of it, is not ſo eaſy to be reſolved. There are in the converſion of ſinners caſes extraordinary, which muſt not be drawn into example, nor prejudice the general rule; as in St. Paul, Auſtin, &c. But ordinarily, that there is ſome diſpoſition and temper of ſpirit more apt than others to receive the effectual impreſſions of it, is moſt certain. Such is the honeſt * and good heart in the parable; ſuch are the humble and meek, and the poor in ſpirit; ſuch as do the truth, and the will of God, (ſo far as their information ſerves them); ſuch are the weary and heavy laden, and the like: They are reſembled to ſheep, and to babes, and are ſaid to be of God, to have learned of the Father, and to know him: Theſe are ſaid to be ordained, that is, diſpoſed, and in a fit poſture for eternal life, Acts xiii. 48. and of this ingenuous and noble temper were thoſe Bereans, Acts xvii. 11. They were, as it were, in the ſuburbs or confines, not far from the kingdom of God; and upon the firſt call by the word of grace, they obeyed, and ſtept into it.

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* John v. 44.

† Prov. xxvi. 12.

Deso. But by what means may a man obtain to be thus diſpoſed, or qualified, for faith and converſion?

Samar. Mr. Baxter tells you very truly, that common grace is truly preparative and diſpoſitive to ſaving grace †; ſo that if we employ and improve the firſt, we may be confident we ſhall obtain the other: Not by any merit, or cauſality, force or efficacy of our work, or by any natural connexion; but merely by God's grace ‡, by the counſel of his holy and irreſiſtible will, by which it hath pleaſed him to appoint the one as a neceſſary conſequent of the other.

Deso. Have you any grounds for this aſſertion?

Samar. Yea, that ground ſo often laid down by our Saviour, in the parable of the talents—" § To him that hath, [made uſe of grace] ſhall be given, *and* he ſhall have more abundance."

Deso. That is, he ſhall have more of the ſame kind: if he employs his talents of common grace, he ſhall have an addition of common grace; if he employs his talents of ſaving grace, he ſhall receive a greater meaſure of ſaving grace.

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* Pſalm xxv. 15. John iii. 21. John vii. 21. Matth. xi. 28. John x. 28. Matth. xi. 25. 1 Pet. ii. 2. John viii. 47. 1 John iv. 5, 6. John vi. 45.

† Of Saving Faith, p. 39. 41. 46. ‡ Dr. Jackſon, p. 3109, &c.

§ Matth. xxv. 28, 29.

Samar. Nay, God's bounty will be extended further*. Upon the improvement of common grace he ſhall receive ſaving grace; for to him that had improved his talents, he ſaith, "Be thou ruler over *ſo many* cities".† The remuneration is in a matter of a higher nature. And this God doth vouchſafe, not of debt, or condignity, or congruity; but of grace and mercy ſtill.

Deso. Suppoſe two perſons alike affected in mind and body, expoſed to the like temptation, and attended with equal aſſiſtances of grace; whether is it poſſible for one of theſe to ſtand impregnable, while the other miſcarries under this tryal? And if he may, whence is this difference in the iſſue and event of this combat?

Samar. Take the whole complex together, and there can be no other cauſe aſſigned, but the liberty of the will: for grace cannot be the cauſe why any man doth fail of his duty; but the will, aſſiſted by grace, is a partial cauſe of that man's ſtanding in his integrity, and the total cauſe of this man's falling from it. Thus St. Auſtin hath determined the queſtion: Of two perſons alike affected in ſoul and body, alike aſſaulted by the temptation of the ſame beauty; why one of them ſhould proſtitute himſelf to the temptation, while the other perſeveres in his chaſtity,—Auſtin could aſſign no other reaſon but their own will; the one would, the other would not violate his ſacred chaſtity. 2. If you take the caſe a-pieces, Proſper § anſwers diſtinctly to the ſeveral

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[*] Matth. xxv. 22. "Thou haſt been faithful in a little, I will make thee ruler over much."

[†] Luke xix. 17. 19. [‡] Lib. xii. de civit, cap. 6. apud Grevinch.

[§] De vocat. Gent. lib. ii. c. 26.

parts, and renders the cauſe exactly well: That the aſſiſtance of grace is rejected of many, 'tis ſolely of their own naughtineſs; but that it is embraced of many, 'tis both of the divine grace, and the human will.

Deso. But Sir, that good uſe, and that co-operation of the will, are pious actions, and ſavingly good; and therefore ſhould be aſcribed wholly to the grace of God, and not at all to the will of man.

Samar. That good uſe, and that co-operation of the will, are to be aſcribed to grace, as the principle and primary cauſe; but yet as they are moral actions, they do derive their efficacy and virtue from the will, and not from grace wholly; which may be clearly evinced by this dilemma of the Remonſtrants, That *good uſe of grace*, is either an act of *duty* in us, which ſhould be deemed *virtuous*, or it is not: If it is, how therefore is it altogether the effect of ſaving grace? If it is not, what therefore is it? If you will ſay what it is, ſo as to make it poſſible to be underſtood by him who is only endued with common ſenſe, you will be quick-ſighted and diſcerning.—*Examen cenſuræ*, p. 180.

Deso. Sir, I am ſcrupled at this doctrine; for to my ſenſe, it argues, That a man doth ſomething to diſcriminate himſelf, in the work of grace; which, to me, ſeems directly contrary to the apoſtle, 1 Cor. iv. 7. where he ſaith, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what haſt thou that thou haſt not received? Now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received it?"

Samar. I confeſs, I have, ſometimes, had the ſame ſcruple about that text: but upon better conſideration, I find (according to the judgment of the moſt learned expoſitors) that the apoſtle there ſpeaks not to our purpoſe: For (if I may take that liberty (ſo to render the ſchool-diſtinction) he ſpeaks not of ſanctifying, but of edifying grace; I mean, ſuch as was given to thoſe teachers, not ſo much for the private good of themſelves, as for the public benefit of the church, as appears 1 Cor. iii. 5.

Chriſt had no univerſities then to breed apoſtles in; and finding very few or none fit for the work of the miniſtry, which he had occaſion to employ them in, he was fain to make them fit by miracle; and being qualified upon that account, the apoſtle juſtly checks their arrogance, for glorying in ſuch gifts as were not acquired by their own ſtudy and induſtry, but inſpired into them immediately of the Holy Ghoſt: Which abilities therefore were not rewardable, nor commendable in them that had them, as to the manner of poſſeſſion*; but only ſo far forth as they did employ and improve them for the edification of the church. [Such in general were all thoſe diverſities † of gifts, and operations diſpenſed amongſt the faithful upon the firſt promulgation of the goſpel.]

This light of the knowledge of Chriſt brake in upon them irreſiſtibly; for which cauſe the production of it in them, is fitly reſembled to the production of light at the firſt creation, 2 Cor. iv. 6. But it is otherwiſe in the gifts of ſaving faith and holineſs, whereof the poſſeſſion is a matter of free choice and acceptation, Deut. xxx. 19.—Luke x. 42. Prov. i. 29. This light may be excluded and reſiſted, John i. 5. v. 35. Job xxiv. 13. John iii. 13. Such therefore as do embrace this light, may very well be ſaid to difference themſelves from ſuch as do reject it.

When our Saviour tells Martha "one thing is needful: Mary hath choſen the good part," doth he not commend Mary for ſuch a diſcrimination?

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* Cor. ix. 16, 17. Gal. i. 11, 12. † 2 Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6, 7.

But if this had been made in her by the ſole irreſiſtible operation of divine grace; Martha might very eaſily have excuſed herſelf, and have charged the fault (that ſhe had not made the like choice) upon his deficiency, in a matter ſo needful to her.

When the great Jubilee is proclaimed, and the priſon-doors ſet all open, and the officer employed to knock off all the priſoners fetters; doth not he who rejoiceth at the proclamation, and accepts of liberty, and goes forth of the priſon, do ſomething to difference himſelf from him that ſuffers his ears to be boared through, not accepting deliverance, and delights to be a ſlave ſtill? Do but compare and weigh the quotations in the margin*, and make the application to the ſtate of ſinners under the promulgation of the goſpel, at your leiſure.

Why was our Saviour ſo tranſported with admiration at the faith of ſome, as well as at the unbelief of others †, if that faith were wrought ſo irreſiſtibly, that the believer contributed nothing towards it? 'Tis certain, ſome do neglect the gift that is given them, and bury their talents, and receive the grace of God in vain, and are wanting to it, and fall from it, and turn it into laſciviouſneſs‡ :—others are careful to retain, and ſtir up, to employ and improve what they have received: do not theſe, by this means, co-operate to their own diſcrimination? He that obeys God, certainly differs exceedingly from him that obeys not; and does not his obedience (which is his own act and duty; performed by the aſſiſtance of God's grace) help to make the difference? Nothing can be more evident.

St. Auſtin found nothing in this § text to contradict it, but a man might co-operate to his own

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[*] Exod. xxi. 5, 6. Iſa. vi. 1. Cap. xlix. 9. Cap. xlii. 7. Luke i. 79. Rom. vi. 14. with *ver.* 16.

[†] Mal. viii. 10. [‡] 2 Cor. vi. 1. Heb. xii. 15. Jude 4. Heb. xii. 28.

[§] 1 Cor. iv. 7.

diſcrimination. For in his book *of the Spirit and Letter*, ch. xxxiv. (which book, amongſt others, was oppoſed to Pelagius) having ſtarted this difficulty; That if the will to believe, be therefore aſcribed to God, becauſe it is ſaid by the apoſtle "What haſt thou that thou haſt not received?" it ſeems, upon a like account, that ſin may be attributed to him alſo; becauſe that is derived from the free will which we received from him at our creation.

If man can do nothing to difference himſelf,

1. Why doth God give ſo many commands to him for his renovation and improvement?

2. Why doth he render praiſe and glory to his ſaints, and ſo often commend them, ſaying, They are worthy?

3. Why doth he ſo earneſtly incite them unto duty, by promiſes and threatenings? Why doth he upbraid unbelievers, for rejecting the counſel of God againſt themſelves, and judging themſelves unworthy of eternal life? and finally brands them with ſhame, confuſion, and eternal torments? All theſe topicks will afford us moſt pregnant proofs that men may, and many times do, act ſomething towards their own diſcrimination.

Deso. But will not this abate the accounts of thankfulneſs in believers, if they receive no more than unbelievers do?

Samar. The faithful do receive ſuch aſſiſting and following grace, as the unregenerate receive not, though their preventing grace be equal. But beſides, am not I obliged to be thankful to my benefactor, becauſe others do undervalue and ſlight his bounty? Shall not the children of Sion be joyful in their King, and ſing hoſanna to the Son of David, becauſe others cry out, "We will not have this man to reign over us?" The ſhort is, we owe our diſcrimination (be our own concurrence what it will) to the divine, preventing, and aſſiſting opera-

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† Matt. viii. 10. ‡ 2 Cor. vi. 1. Heb. xii. 15. Jude 4. Heb. xii. 28. § 1 Cor. iv. 7.

diſcrimination. For in his book *of the Spirit and Letter*, Ch. xxxiv. (which book, amongſt others, was oppoſed to Pelagius) having ſtarted this difficulty; That if the will to believe, be therefore aſcribed to God, becauſe it is ſaid by the apoſtle, "What haſt thou that thou haſt not received?" It ſeems, upon a like account, that ſin may be attributed to him alſo; becauſe that is derived from the free will which we received from him at our creation. Out of this difficulty the father winds himſelf in theſe words:——

"Let man attend and perceive; his will is not "therefore to be attributed to the divine Act, "becauſe it is from that freedom of choice which "was concreated with us; but it is becauſe God "ſo operates in the impreſſions of what we ſee, "as that we may will, and we may believe: whe"ther we ſee outwardly, by evangelical admo"nitions, where the precepts of the moral law "do ſomething, in reminding man of his infir"mity, that he may have recourſe to the grace "which juſtifieth him who believeth; or inward"ly, where no man hath power over what may "come into his mind: but to approve or diſap"prove is properly *his Will*. By theſe means "therefore, when God works with the rational "ſoul, that it may believe to ſalvation (for it "cannot believe any thing by free choice, where "there is no ſuaſion, or powerful attraction as an "object of faith); and truly God thus works in "man to will and to believe, and in all his mercy "preventeth us. But to accept, or reject this "calling of God, as I ſaid before, is properly of "the Will. Which fact he not only admits, "becauſe it is ſaid, *What haſt thou which thou haſt* "*not received?* But he alſo confirms it:—*For to* "*receive and to retain the benefits of which it bears*

“ *the ſoul is incapable, but by faith*: and by this
“ what it may conſent to, and receive, or retain,
“ is of God.”——

If man can do nothing to difference himſelf,

1. Why doth God give ſo many commands to him for his renovation and improvement?

2. Why doth he render praiſe and glory to his ſaints, and ſo often commend them, ſaying, they are worthy?

3. Why doth he ſo earneſtly incite them unto duty, by promiſes and threatenings? Why doth he upbraid unbelievers, for rejecting the counſel of God againſt themſelves, and judging themſelves unworthy of eternal liſe? and finally brands them with ſhame, confuſion, and eternal torments? All theſe topicks will afford us moſt pregnant proofs that men may, and many times do, act ſomething towards their own diſcrimination.

DESO. But will not this abate the accounts of thankfulneſs in believers, if they receive no more than unbelievers do?

SAMAR. The faithful do receive ſuch aſſiſting and following grace, as the unregenerate receive not, though their preventing grace be equal. But beſides, am not I obliged to be thankful to my benefactor, becauſe others do undervalue and ſlight his bounty? Shall not the children of Sion be joyful in their king, and ſing hoſanna to the Son of David, becauſe others cry out, “ We will not have this man to reign over us?” The ſhort is, we owe our diſcrimination (be our own concurrence what it will) to the divine preventing and aſſiſting operation. And God's grace and mercy doth follow us all the days of our life; and finally, he crowns our co-operation with eternal joy and glory. And ſure here is ſeed enough to bring forth a full harveſt of thankſgiving.

Desol. Methinks this ſeems to lay a ground for glorying, which the apoſtle would by all means have excluded in the work of grace.

Samar. The goſpel allows us to ſeek for *glory and honour*, as well as for *immortality*, Rom. ii. 7. Indeed our Saviour blames the Jews, for that they did receive honour one of another, and did not ſeek for that honour that cometh from God only, John v. 44. To glory in what we do, as done by the ſtock of our own ſtrength; and to glory in what we receive, as being received upon the account of our own merits, is wicked arrogance, and condemned by the apoſtle. But we are allowed, yea, we are required to *glory in the Lord*; and we may glory alſo, that *we are able to do all things* (if we glory that we do it upon this goſpel account) *through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us*. For the will of man (in what we do graciouſly) doth not confer any power upon grace, but rather grace confers the power and propenſion upon the will, and moves it to determine itſelf, and hath, beſides its prevention and excitation, a co-efficiency in the determination of the will.

Desol. My deareſt *Samaritanus*, ſeeing you have taken the trouble upon you to diſcourſe me (if you can) into ſatisfaction of all my doubts and ſcruples, I muſt beg your patience to hear out all my Objections. There is one more in that ixth to the Romans, verſe 11. *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth, It was ſaid unto Rebecca,* (concerning thoſe Twins whom ſhe had conceived) *The elder ſhall ſerve the younger: As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated.*

SAMAR. I am ſo deſirous of your ſatisfaction, that I entertain it as a contentment, when you afford me the opportunity to adminiſter unto it. And now you offer me that objection I have long expected from you: To which I anſwer,

1. That St. Auſtin himſelf concludes the Election and Reprobation of theſe very perſons, Jacob and Eſau, to proceed upon God's fore-knowledge of what they ſhould do reſpectively; for thus he writeth, "No man is choſen unleſs he differs "from him who is rejected. So that I know not "how to interpret that ſaying, *That God hath "choſen us before the foundation of the world*, but "by underſtanding it of his * *foreknowledge* of "Faith and works of piety. *Jacob* was not cho-"ſen that he might be made good, but being "made good he was in a capacity to be choſen." And in the ſame book he attributes *Eſau*'s reprobation to his own actual miſcarriages; for thus he writeth; "*Eſau* would not, and did not run. "Had he willed, and had he run, by the help of "God he had attained: but by a contempt of "the divine call he was made a reprobate."

2. But whence doth it appear that Eſau was a reprobate? Is the proof of it in thoſe words, *Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated?* But (1.) the apoſtle produceth them but as a verification of what was alledged before from the Oracle to Rebecca, *The elder ſhall ſerve the younger*; which ſure imports not an eternal reprobation. (2.) For God to love and hate perſons to ſuch effects, without reſpect to ſome qualifications in them, would argue injuſtice, even by St. Auſtin's own confeſſion; for he ſaith†, "Is there un-"righteouſneſs with God? God forbid. For "it ſeems unjuſt, that God ſhould love one,

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* *Ad Simpl.* lib. i. *See.* Rom. viii. 29. *and* chap. xi. 2. Pet. i. 2. † *In Enchirid.* c. 98.

" and hate another, without any merits of good " or evil works." But grant Almighty God his liberty to love freely, as no doubt he may do; yet the apoſtle tells us, He is ſo juſt, *His wrath comes* (only where he finds ſin,—a ſufficient cauſe to ſend it) *upon the children of diſobedience**. That their progenitors, or God upon their account, have entailed that title, with the wrath annexed, upon them§, and never cuts it off, (in a matter of this everlaſting concernment) ought not to be affirmed without great authority. Thoſe who are ſaid to be children of wrath *by nature*, Epheſ. ii. 3. are not ſaid to be ſo by the nature they were born in, but by the nature† they walked in, which was their evil cuſtom, and courſe of treſpaſſes and ſins, verſes 1, 2.

3. Grant Eſau a reprobate in his Mother's womb, and what certainty can the Faithful (for ſuch without doubt was Iſaac when he begot Eſau) have of the ſalvation of their deareſt babes? So ſad an oracle (had ſhe met with ſuch interpreters) would have been more heavy to Rebecca, than the double burthen ſhe travailed with. But,

4. There was no ſuch word in the Oracle to Rebecca, Gen. xxv. 23. Nor any ſuch heard of, till the time of the prophet Malachi, of which I ſhall give a fuller account anon. So that Eſau in in his own perſon, is not like to be concerned in it.

5. If the Oracle had ſpake to her in that very phraſe and language, it would have been capable of a milder conſtruction, than to ſignify his eternal reprobation. For when the Scripture ſpeaks of *hatred*, it doth not always mean that which is abſolute, but many times that which is comparative,

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* Epheſ. v. 6. Col. iii. 6. § Jer. xxxi. 29. Ezek. xviii. 2. Jon. iv. 11. † The word [*nature*] is put for cuſtom. 1 Cor. xi. 14.

which is no more than a leſs degree of love: And ſo God may hate the innocent, that is, love him leſs then another innocent; for God is not bound to love all alike, and with an equal degree of love. That the word hatred is frequently uſed in this ſenſe, you may obſerve as you read the Scriptures, Gen. xxix. 31. the text ſaith, *The Lord ſaw that Leah was hated*; yet in the former verſe 'tis only ſaid, that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. So Luke xiv. 26. our Saviour ſaith, *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, &c.* which ſignifies but to love them leſs, as St. Matthew doth record it, Mat. x. 37. See alſo to this purpoſe. Deut. xxi. 15. Prov. xiii. 24. John xii. 25. with Matt. x. 37. And it can have no other ſenſe when applied here to Eſau, or rather to his Poſterity.

6. Were it meant of God's decree of Reprobation, I would fain underſtand wherein the execution of that decree conſiſted? It muſt conſiſt in the abandoning Eſau to a ſtate of temporal ſervitude (*a*) and his *hell* muſt be an earthly wilderneſs, (*b*) and his own brother (the elect Jacob) aſſign'd him for his tormentor (*c*) againſt whom he had a promiſe too that he ſhould finally prevail (*d*) over him. What groſs abſurdities theſe are, who wants a judgment to diſcern? Yet all theſe are parts of the Oracle, or appendages in the proceſs of the affair, as you will find by conſulting the ſacred text to this purpoſe.

Laſtly, There is no ground to conclude that Eſau was a reprobate; for it doth not appear probable that (in his perſon) he fell from God to ſerve *idols*. And for that *prophaneneſs* imputed to him,

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(*a*) Gen. xxv. 23. (*b*) Mal. i. 3. (*c*) Gen. xxvii. 29. (*d*) Gen. xxvii. 40.

him, Heb. xii. 16. it conſiſted but in the diveſting himſelf of a privilege *(e)* annexed to his primogeniture; and what ſacredneſs ſoever was in this, he was ſupplanted *(f)* by his brother's policy, and induced to part with it in a caſe of extreme neceſſity*(g)*, to ſave his life, his brother being ſo unnatural, that he would relieve him upon no other terms*(h)*; and Eſau repented of this ill bargain too*(i)*. For the fornication aſſociated with profaneneſs by the apoſtle in that place, it is no part of Eſau's character, but belongs to the apoſtates of thoſe times, from the imitation of whoſe practices the Hebrews are there ſo earneſtly diſſuaded. As for the hatred *(k)* he did bear a while towards his brother, though it were kindled upon an exceeding provocation, it was not implacable; for ſuch was his kindneſs to him at their meeting, that Jacob tells him(*l*), *I have ſeen thy face as though I had ſeen the face of God, and thou waſt pleaſed with me.*

He was not ſo happy as to pleaſe his parents in his firſt marriage: his wives were diſtaſteful to Iſaac and Rebecca(*m*), but upon what account is not ſo eaſy to determine. If we ſay with *Diodati* and others, that it was for their idolatries, this was no more than that guilt that ſtained the practice and education of Jacob's wives alſo, as the ſacred ſtory doth record it(*n*). However if herein he were guilty of ſome undutifulneſs to his Parents, yet that the Elect, and after their Regeneration too, may fall into as foul and fouler ſins than that amounts to, and likewiſe continue in them, (God knows how long) we have the opinion of a perſon

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(e) Gen. xxv. 29, *to the end.* *(f)* chap. xxvii. 36. *(g)* chap. xxv. 32. *(h)* verſ. 31, 33. *(i)* ch. xxvii. 36. 38. Heb. xii. 17. *(k)* Gen. xxvii. 41. *(l)* Gen. xxxiii. 10. *(m)* Gen. xxvi. 35. xxvii. 46. (*n*) Gen. xxxi. 19, 30, 32, Joſh. xxiv. 2.

perſon of ſome note (*o*) amongſt us. And beſides, that he intended the diſpleaſure of his Parents in thoſe matches is not probable : that he endeavoured their ſatisfaction afterwards (an undeniable inſtance of his repentance) is evident from Gen. xxviii. 8, 9. where we read, that *when he ſaw the daughters of Canaan pleaſed not his father,* (by his forbidding Jacob to match himſelf amongſt them) *then went Eſau unto Iſhmael, Abraham's ſon* (who was as near related to Iſaac as Laban was unto Rebecca) *and took his daughter to be his wife* ; and this was done without doubt to comply with the temper and deſires of his Parents.

Who then dares condemn Eſau for a Reprobate? Though Pareus exerciſe this intolerable ſeverity, Millerus durſt not, Oecolampadius durſt not, Dr. Prideaux durſt not. Saith Millerus (*a*) ; " Many probable conjectures may be collected " out of Geneſis to ſhew that Eſau was not ſo " rejected of Almighty God as to be eternally " damned." Where (*b*) Oecolampadius alſo ſaith, " I dare not ſay Eſau was a Reprobate for all that ſaying of the Prophet Malachi ; but rather, that things ſpiritual are repreſented in a figure by things temporal." To which teſtimonies Dr. Prideaux (*c*) adds, " Canaan was a type of heaven." " But (ſaith he) we muſt not conclude from " thence, (as the corrupt Rhyme in ſome of the " editions of our Pſalms doth) that all thoſe were " excluded out of heaven, to whom the Lord denied entrance into that typical reſt ; For ſo we " ſhould conclude Moſes and Aaron to be in a " very ſad condition.

H h DESO.

(*o*) Mr. Baxter. See his Diſputations of Right to the Sacraments, pag. 327, &c.

(*a*) In Malac. i. (*b*) In Malac. i. 2, 3. (*c*) Lect. 8. de Salut. Eth. poſt princ.

Deso. I am very much ſatisfied to hear ſuch comfortable news of Eſau, for I thought he had hard meaſure to be ſupplanted of his birth-right by the practice of an unkind brother, and afterwards to be cheated of his father's bleſſing by a confederacy betwixt him and his mother, and to be damned eternally too. For I took him (as far as I was able to diſcover by the ſtory) to be a down-right honeſt man (in the general) and we ſee, after all his unkind uſage, he profeſt himſelf content with his condition, Gen. xxxiii. 9.

Samar. That the Oracle of God gave a Prediction to Rebecca concerning the prelation of Jacob before Eſau, we have a clear and infallible evidence; but whether the means uſed by Jacob and his Mother to compaſs that prelation were warrantable, I ſhall not diſpute. Sure I am, a prediction of what will be, doth not legitimate every means for the completion of it. Jeroboam had as fair a title to the crown of thoſe ten tribes as one could wiſh, if prediction were a good conveyance*, 1 Kings xi. 11. 29. to 39. yet God diſclaims the Inauguration of him, Hoſea. viii. 4. *They have ſet up Kings, but not by me; they have made Princes, and I knew* (approved) *it not.* Which words are thus interpreted by Deodati‡, "The "people of their own motion, without enquiring "after my will, or ſtaying for my command or "permiſſion, have choſen and made kings of "their own heads, ſeparating themſelves from "the lawful rule of David's poſterity." For ſo it was, as appears, 1 Kings xii. 20. Upon which text, the ſame Deodati his note is, "Though this

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[*] See Calvin. Inſtitut. lib. i. cap. 18. ſect 4. pag. 129.
[‡] Annot. ad. * Hoſ. viii 4.

" this came to paſs by a ſecret providence of God,
" and according as it was foretold, yet was it condemned, Hoſea viii. 4. becauſe the people were " induced to it by evil and illegal motives, and " waited not for God's declaration concerning the " time and means, as David had done in ſucceeding Saul." To apply this to Jacob's caſe; We find not that God had declared any thing concerning the time or means of his obtaining dominion over his brother Eſau; and that his father Iſaac diſliked the way of his advancement, we may gather from his indignation upon Jacob's surpriſal of him in the matter of the bleſſing, Gen. xxvii. 33. And if the Oracle* of God be to be underſtood of a perſonal dominion granted to Jacob over Eſau, why ſhould we not conclude, that he did forfeit his perſonal right by outrunning his commiſſion? For, that actually he exerciſed no ſuch dominion is evident: Nay, ſo far was he from aſſuming that authority, that we ſee he does rather pay homage to Eſau, for he courts, and calls him his Lord, preſents him, and bows himſelf ſeven times before him at one addreſs; which argues, that the princely ſpirit was yet more in Eſau than in him. See Gen. xxxiii. 3, to 16.

Deso. It ſeems then, that that Oracle to Rebecca had not at leaſt, its primary completion in the perſons of Jacob and Eſau.

Sama. No, it had not, the full accompliſhment was in their poſterities‡. To this purpoſe is the burden of the word of the Lord to Iſrael (the poſterity of Jacob) by Malachi, *I have loved you, ſaith the Lord; yet ye ſay, Wherein haſt thou*

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* Gen. xxv. 23. ‡ See 2 Eſdras vi. 9.

loved us? Was not Eſau Jacob's brother, ſaith the Lord? yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Eſau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waſte for the dragons of the wilderneſs, Mal. i. 1, 2, 3. And moſt expreſſly in the Oracle itſelf, Gen. xxv. 23. For, *the Lord ſaid unto Rebecca, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people ſhall be ſeparated from thy bowels, and the one people ſhall be ſtronger than the other people; and the elder ſhall ſerve the younger*. This is the Oracle.

Deso. But ſuppoſe this Oracle doth not ſo much concern the perſons of Jacob and Eſau as their poſterities; yet may there not be an abſolute election of the one, ſignified by the word (loved;) and an abſolute reprobation of the other, ſignified by the word (hated?)

Samar. No, we may not ſo underſtand it; for then it would follow, that all the Iſraelites were abſolutely elected, (which is contrary to the event atteſted by ſcripture, 1 Cor. x. 5. and Heb. iii. 19.) and the whole poſterity of Eſau preciſely predeſtinated to damnation, which appears to be falſe by the example of Job and other holy men that lived in that nation. Beſides, that ſervitude of Eſau's poſterity, relating clearly to a temporal ſtate, as Malachi doth expreſſly expound it, how incongruous is that interpretation that underſtands it of a reprobation to eternal death? And that the Apoſtle did not think the Jews of his time, and of whom he writes, under ſuch an irrecoverable ſtate of miſery, as the decree of abſolute Reprobation imports, I conceive ſufficiently evinced in the examination of Tilenus, from page 111 to 116. to which I refer you, if need be, for further ſatisfaction.

Deso. I can peruſe that at my leiſure. In the interim whereas the Apoſtle ſaith*, *The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to the election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was ſaid, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger.* I pray, doth not that imply moſt clearly, that this prelation of the younger before the elder, was an act of grace, and undeſerved favour, without any foreſight or reſpect to qualifications in their perſons?

Samar. This is moſt undeniably true, it is the very ſcope of the apoſtle's diſcourſe, and the thing he labours ſo much to make good.

Deso. What uſe then doth the Apoſtle make of it, having ſo fully aſſerted and proved it?

Samar. The uſe he makes of it is this, To declare, that in the preſent age, under the goſpel, God was likewiſe, of his mere grace and favour, pleaſed to invite and call men unto Faith, and upon their Faith to adopt them to the privileges of his children; and this not out of reſpect to any merits in them, for ſo many and ſo great generally were their tranſgreſſions, that they deſerved nothing but perdition. Therefore this their election unto grace and the means of ſalvation, proceeds *not of works, but of him that calleth*; ſince God, when he might have damn'd them juſtly among other ſinners, was pleaſed notwithſtanding to call them unto Faith; and *believing* upon that call, to chooſe them for his children. And this is that *Election of Grace* to which at leaſt the apoſtle alludeth, Rom. xi. 5.

Deso. I deſire you would give me a view of the apoſtle's diſcourſe upon this ſubject in one ſhort entire ſum, that I may the better comprehend it.

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* Rom. ix. 11.

Samar. I ſhall do it moſt readily, becauſe I know it will be of much advantage to your underſtanding of the point. You apprehend already, that the apoſtle is diſputing with the Jews, whoſe privileges were very glorious, and they knew it well. *To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice of God, and the promiſes: Theirs were the Fathers, and of them, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever*§. By ſo many ſignal acts of Grace they concluded, God had tied himſelf ſo faſt to them, that they muſt needs inherit the bleſſing. Though their zeal in adhering to the Law was blind and pertinacious, yet they plead their title to righteouſneſs and life upon that account, and reſolve they ſhall be heirs, as is *intimated*, Rom. iv. 14. Otherwiſe they alledged, God ſhould unjuſtly caſt away his own people, Rom. xi. 1. and cancel his own promiſes, and make his word of none effect, Rom. ix. 6. and ſo become unfaithful; yea, if he ſhould adopt the Gentiles, who were no way zealous of the Law, and beſides, (as they thought) greater ſinners than themſelves, if God ſhould adopt them to be his children, upon their faith and ſubmiſſion to the goſpel: and reject thoſe his ancient people, who did ſo earneſtly contend for the honour of his own law, and would ſeek * for righteouſneſs and life no where elſe, but from the obſervation of that: If God ſhould deal thus, if he ſhould after this manner prefer the unworthy Gentiles before the Jews, who at leaſt were not more unworthy, he ſhould become *unrighteous* too as well as unfaithful, as is implied Rom. ix. 14. To this the apoſtle replies, 1. In general, that the Law of

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§ Rom. ix. 4, 5. * —— ix. 31, 32. Gal. v. 2, 3, 4.

Moſes (as it abſtracts from Faith in Chriſt) could not bring in Juſtification unto life, by reaſon of ſin, which had overſpread all[‡], and that it was never intended to that purpoſe, Rom. iii. 19, 20, 23. But that ſuch juſtification was to be obtained upon the accounts of grace, and conſequently by Faith, which doth eſtabliſh Grace, and not deſtroy it, Rom. iv. 16. and that this diſpenſation of Grace for juſtification unto life, was extended freely to all nations, Gentiles as well as Jews, without difference. This the apoſtle aſſerts, Rom. iii. 21. to the end. And in the next chapter he proves both branches, by inſtancing in Abraham, who (1.) was not juſtified by the Law, but by Faith, Rom. iv. 3, &c. and (2.) he was juſtified while he was in the condition of a Gentile, uncircumciſed: Whence he concludes, that the bleſſedneſs of Juſtification unto life doth belong alſo to the uncircumciſion, that is to the Gentiles, Rom. iv. 9[*]. &c. And this was God's conſtitution four hundred and thirty years before the law of Moſes was given, as the apoſtle alledgeth in handling the ſame controverſy to the Galatians[†]. This is St. Paul's reply in general. Then (2.) more particularly, he tells them, though God did now caſt off them for their unbelief, who were formerly his renowned people, yet he could not juſtly be charged with unfaithfulneſs[§], or breach of promiſe therefore. Becauſe when he promiſed he would be the God of Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob, and the God of their ſeed, he did not renounce his own ſupreme right and power, in all times to reſtrain and determine[‖], at his own pleaſure, the ſignification and title of that [their Seed] to whom, and to what manner of perſons he would. This Liberty God always reſerved to Himſelf, and exerciſed it in the family of Abraham, preferring Iſaac before Iſhmael his elder brother, Rom. ix. 6. to 10. And more ſignally he uſed this liberty in the family of Iſaac, (whereof thoſe twins, that had done nothing to diſcriminate themſelves, being yet in their mother's womb) that this his liberty and good pleaſure might be eſtabliſhed, he freely preferred the younger before the elder, verſ. 10, to 14. And theſe preſent proceedings of God's Providence, in accepting the *Gentiles* upon their ſubmiſſion to the faith, and rejecting you for your unbelief, which you ſo much diſpute againſt. This, ſaith the apoſtle, is but the ſame exerciſe of his ſupreme right and power, who had proclaimed to Moſes, your great leader, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy**. And this is the very point he purſues, and preſſes the *equity* of ſo hard, on God's behalf, in the reſt of that chapter: And this is a perfect account of that *Election* and *Reprobation* which are there handled by the apoſtle. And as this reprobation cuts off the *Jews* no longer than they continue in unbelief, Rom. xi. 23. ſo that election comprehends the *Gentiles* no longer than they continue in the Faith, Rom. xi. 22.

[‡] Rom. iii. 9. to the 22.

[*] See chap. x. throughout.

[†] Gal. iii. 17. Vide. Calv. Inſtit. lib. iv. c. 16. ſect. 13, 14.

[§] Rom. iii. 3.

[‖] And the ſcope of the Apoſtle in his Diſpute with the Jews is to prove, that the Faithful were deſigned to be that Seed. Rom. iv. 11, 12, 13, and Rom. ix. 8.

DESOL. Sir, I thank you heartily for your pains in unfolding that, which to me, eſpecially of late, hath been ſuch a hard chapter. But, Sir, there are ſome texts which trouble me, becauſe they ſeem to import (and many learned men do ſo interpret them) that ſome men are under an abſolute decree of reprobation; and that the ſins, for which they are at laſt condemned, come to paſs by God's moſt efficacious decree, ordinance, and pre-determination; and if it be ſo, then their damnation and the ſin that procures it are inevitable. And yet, as I ſaid, they have Scripture for this; for it is ſaid, that thoſe wicked murderers of our Saviour did no other thing than what God's hand and his counſel *determined before to be done*, Acts iv. 28. & chap. ii. 23.

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* Rom. ix. 15.

SAMAR. This text hath exerciſed the wits of the moſt learned. They ſay, 1. This of Acts iv. 27, 28. is not ſpoken of what was formerly done to Chriſt in his perſon, but done to him now, in his diſciples, as in Acts ix. 4, 5. *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* 2. It is not ſaid, *To do thoſe things which* thou didſt determine *that they ſhould do:* but which thou hadſt determined *to be done*. And, 3. That God, foreknowing their malice was ſuch, that their hearts were bent upon it, to execute it, if they were not violently hindered, He determined his own will to a permiſſion, that they might freely execute this wickedneſs. But, 4. Some, to make all clear, do reſolve, that thoſe words, (*both Herod, &c. were gathered together*) ſhould be read as a Parentheſis; and ſo they make the meaning to be, as if the words were placed thus, *For of a truth both Herod, &c. were gathered together againſt thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, for to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel, &c.* And the words following ſeem to favour this interpretation or reading, " And now, " Lord, behold their threatening; and (ſeeing " they are ſo violent in oppoſing, what thou wert " anointed to inſtitute and accompliſh) grant un- " to thy ſervants*," &c. This reading ought not to ſeem ſtrange to you, for the learned obſerve

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* See Acts iv. 27—30.

ſuch Trajections and Parentheſes to be uſual in Scripture, as Luke ii. 34, 35. Acts xiii. 27.

Desol. Sir, I am ſatisfied in the ſenſe you have given of that text. But I pray explain that of St Jude[*], *There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.* How are they ſaid to be *ordained* to it?

Samar. This doth not imply an abſolute Reprobation. The word is, προγεγραμμένοι, *præſcripti*[‡], as the vulgar Latin and Beza read it. But not to trouble you with criticiſms about the word, ſuch *ungodly* men as are there mentioned, *that turn the grace of God into laſciviousneſs, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; they may be ſaid to be *fore-ordained* to condemnation in a threefold ſenſe. 1. By God's general decree, or the ſentence of the *Law*, which is the revelation of that decree. For God being eſſentially holy, cannot take pleaſure in wickedneſs, Pſalm v. 4. nor will he clear the guilty, Exod. xxxiv. 7. He hath therefore from all eternity made a general decree, to render to every man according to his works, Rom. ii. 6. Heaven is awarded to ſuch as (upon the ſtock of a lively faith) *continue patient in well-doing*, but Hell to the *workers of iniquity*. By reaſon of ſuch an eternal law, or decree immutably eſtabliſhed in Heaven, every ſuch wicked wretch may be ſaid to be fore-ordained to condemnation. Not that this decree being an immanent act in God, doth produce any real effect, anſwerable to itſelf, either for the creature before he was made, or in the creature after he was made, until he hath of himſelf, freely made up that meaſure of ſin, unto which hell-fire was awarded by the ſaid decree. But the meaſure of ſin being made up, then (as the lawyers ſpeak) the eternal ſentence produceth a tranſient effect in the guilty creature. As amongſt us, we ſay, the malefactor is a dead man, before either the judge hath given ſentence, or the jury brought in their verdict; that is, he is dead in law, dead by a decree made concerning ſuch crimes, many hundred years perhaps before this malefactor was born. But as on earth, ſo in heaven, the decree, or eternal law of God, doth not *neceſſitate* any man to commit thoſe crimes againſt which it is eſtabliſhed. The law made and provided againſt *felony*, is ſo far from *neceſſitating* any man to commit it, that it ſerves all men for a preſervative againſt it. Neither is any man liable to the condemnation of the law, till he be found guilty, and convicted of the voluntary breach of it. The eternal decree of God concerning ſin, being promulgated into a wholeſome law againſt it, is of the ſame nature. But in regard of ſuch a general decree, he that hath ſinned himſelf up to his full pitch, may be ſaid to be fore-ordained to condemnation; and in this ſenſe the *(finally)* unbelieving *is condemned already**.

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[*] Ver. 4.

[‡] That is, *foretold of old*, or *prophetically written of*

2. Proſcribed in ſome *prediction*, or publick *record:* And this notation is more proper to the word in St. Jude than that by which it is rendered *ordained*; for ϖρογραμμα, ſignifies any thing paſted up upon a door, to be expoſed to public view and notice†, ſo Chriſt is ſaid to be ſet forth before the eyes of the Galatians, He was paſted up upon the pillar of the church, expoſed to public view in the holy ordinances. So were theſe ſeducers St. Jude ſpeaks of, and all ſuch as follow their

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* John iii. 18. & 36.

† Gal. iii. 1.

their pernicious ways, poſted up, ſet forth to condemnation, in thoſe predictions of our Saviour and his apoſtles, to which St. Jude alludes, as appears, verſ. 17, 18. "Remember ye the words "which were ſpoken before of the apoſtles of "our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; how that they told you "there ſhould be mockers," &c. Luke xxi. 8. 2 Theſſ. ii. 5. &c. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. 2 Peter, iii. 3. That St. Jude ſpeaks of ſuch a prediction or preſcription of them, appears by the 14th verſe, "And Enoch alſo the ſeventh "from Adam (as Moſes and others had done) "propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold the Lord "cometh," &c. In this reſpect alſo the ungodly may be ſaid to be fore-ordained, or rather *ſet forth afore* unto condemnation.

3. This may be done in ſome exemplar type or pattern. Thus St. Jude ſaith, that the *Sodomites* were *ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire*, ver. 7. St Peter ſaith, *They were made an enſample unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly*, 2 Pet. ii. 6. For our Saviour's rule is, They that are parallel in the ſin, ſhall be ſo alſo in the judgment, Luke xiii. 3. 5. Hence the Apoſtle, having declared how the Iſraelites had a promiſe of inheriting the land of Canaan, yet upon their multiplied provocations were cut off by God's Oath* from all hope or poſſibility of enjoying it, he gives a caveat unto Chriſtians to avoid the like ſin, leſt they fall under the like irrevocable ſentence of reprobation; Heb. iii. 18. with chap. iv. 1, 11. And 1 Cor. x. 6, 11. he ſaith, The judgments of God upon that people were our types, figures, or enſamples, and written for our admonition.

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* See Numb. xiv. 21, 22, 23. 34, 35.

Laſtly, St. Jude * ſaith of that covetous, ſeditious, and bloody Sect of *Gnoſticks* in his time, that *went in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward*; he ſaith, *They periſhed in the gain-ſaying of Core.* But you will aſk how could that be, when the rebellion of Korah was in Moſes time, and theſe men lived many hundred years after, in St. Jude's time? Why they periſhed in effigie, in their types, patterns or repreſentatives. Thus you ſee in what ſenſe men may be ſaid to be fore-ordained, or ſet forth afore-hand unto condemnation, though their perſons be under no ſuch decree of abſolute reprobation.

DESO. Does not God fore-know that men will ſin, and continue obſtinate in it to their laſt period, and ſo incur the guilt of condemnation according to his eternal law, though he hath not abſolutely ordained them to ſin and condemnation?

SAMAR. They that ſay, God foreknows nothing, but what he hath ordained to come to paſs, making his preſcience to depend upon his decree, they derogate from the glory of God's foreknowledge, which yet we ſee the Scriptures celebrate even with admiration. For what praiſe ſhall the preſcience of God have, if he foreknows nothing but what himſelf hath decreed? ſeeing we can ſcarce find a mortal ſo brutiſh as to be ignorant of what himſelf hath determined. The knowledge of our God, we are aſſured, is unſearchable, and therefore without paſſing a decree for their commiſſion, he foreknows ſin and all ſuch contingencies as, for their obſcurity, are moſt remote to human underſtanding. But there is this further difference betwixt God's Preſcience and his abſolute decree, were there any ſuch, in this caſe: Such a decree, in order to its execution, doth introduce an antecedent, cauſal, and inevitable neceſſity of ſinning and being damned. Preſcience is but a looker-on in the whole proceſs. Preſcience is but a perſpective, through which God diſcovers a man's voluntary motion, till he arrives at that horrible lake of fire and brimſtone: But that decree is ſuch a boat or engine as tranſports him thither, will he, nill he, irreſiſtibly.

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* Verſ. 11.

Deso. I ſhall conſider that this piercing eye of God is always open and upon me, to obſerve my ſteps; and make it a motive and enforcement to ſteer my courſe ſo much the more exactly. But you muſt give me leave to aſk you two or three queſtions more: And firſt, deal ingenuouſly with me, doth God give grace ſufficient unto faith and repentance to ſuch as periſh for the abuſe and neglect of it?

Samar. God gives, or is ready to give, if we make no new obſtructions, that grace, that is ſufficient to the obtaining of faith; perhaps, not immediately, but grace ſufficient to uſe the means, grace to do more than we do in order to the obtaining of it. You may reflect upon what was ſaid above upon, *To him that hath, ſhall be given.*

That ſome men may periſh who receive ſufficient grace to bring them to ſalvation, if they would perſevere in it, appears plainly from hence, that our Saviour ſaith to his Diſciples, Matt. xxiv. 13. "He that ſhall endure to the end, the ſame ſhall "be ſaved." And, "If ye continue in his "goodneſs — Rom. xi. 22. Ye ſhall not be "cut off ‡". Can a man arrive at a place that is not in the direct way that leads thither? He muſt be inſtructed to turn, and not exhorted only to continue in it. And how could St. Paul ſay of ſome, that " they made ſhipwrack of faith and a good conſcience," 1 Tim. i. 19. Can that be ſhipwracked that was never in the Veſſel? and can that be called a ſhipwrack, which though preſerved intirely, would but bring us to perdition.

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‡ See 2 John, 8. Gal. iii. 4.

DESOL. But ſhould a man, through his ſinful improvidence, make ſhipwrack of this grace, may his damage be recovered?

SAMAR. Yes; how elſe could the Apoſtle give order, *To deliver* the inceſtuous *Corinthian unto Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit might be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus* § ? Cor. v. 5. If there be no reſtitution for perſons that have once waſted that portion of grace that was put into their hands, then there can be no right prodigals but our firſt parents. What think you of David, Peter, Solomon, and others, whoſe falls were moſt lamentable, and yet they were reſtored by a new converſion?

DESOL. The Apoſtle ſaith of ſome, that *if they fall away, it is impoſſible to renew them again unto repentance,* Heb. vi. 4. 6.

SAMAR. The word IMPOSSIBLE doth many times ſignify no more but, *it is extremely difficult,* but in that place to the Hebrews, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of ſuch as do not only fall away, but add perſecution of the goſpel of grace to their apoſtacy from it; *For they tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they where sanctified an unholy thing, and do deſpite to the Spirit of grace.* Though we may not *give that which is holy unto dogs**, *nor caſt our pearls before*

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* See Ezek. xviii. 2. 22. † Matth. vii. 6.

before swine, who will *trample them under their feet, and return and rent us*, yet we are aſſured *the fatted calf is killed* * and made ready to entertain the returning Prodigal. Sinners are therefore every where exhorted to *return*, and God hath promiſed *to heal their backſlidings*, *Hoſ.* xiv. 1, 2, 4. Repentance is *Secunda Tabula poſt naufragium*. And Chriſt hath invited *all that are heavy laden* with their ſins, *to come unto him*, Matth. xi. 28. And, if they come, we have his promiſe, *He will in no wiſe caſt them out*. John vi. 37.

Desol. This is a very encouraging Invitation, but I ſuppoſe it concerns none but ſuch as Chriſt died for; and becauſe ſo many flatly deny Univerſal Redemption, and the holy Scripture itſelf ſeems ſometimes to reſtrain his death to a certain number, as where it ſaith, *He gave his life a Ranſom for many*‡. Therefore I would gladly be ſatisfied about the extent of that death of his, whether the ſatisfaction and Merit of it were for all; I mean not all Sorts only, but all Individuals.

Samar. You have aſked a very material Queſtion; for ſeeing *there is ſalvation in no other* but Chriſt‖, ſuch as are not redeemed by him, (if there were any ſuch) can receive no benefit (as to matter of ſalvation from him, nor have any comfort really adminiſtred unto them. But if we receive the teſtimony of men, the teſtimony of God is greater†: and this is the teſtimony of God which he hath given of his Son.

1. That, "He came to ſeek and to ſave that "which was loſt *(a)*: That God laid upon him "the iniquity of us all *(b)*. That he died for the "ungodly *(c)*, for ſinners *(d)*, for his enemies(*e*),

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* Luk. xv. 23. ‡ Matt. xx. 28. ‖ Act. iv. 12. †1 John v. 9. (*a*) Matt. xviii. 11. Luke xix. 10. (*b*) Iſai. liii. 6. (*c*) Rom. v. 6. (*d*) Rom. v. 8. (*e*) Rom. v. 10.

" for all(*f*), for every man(*g*), for the world(*h*),
" for the whole world(*i*), for the unjuſt(*k*), and
" finally diſobedient (*l*)."

2. That he died for as many as are dead in Adam. Rom. v. 12. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 22. 2 Cor. v. 14.

3. That he died for as many as are bound to believe in him. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20*.

4. That He died for as many as are bound to adore and ſerve him. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. with Rom. xiv. 9.

5. That He died for as many as we are obliged to pray for in Chriſt's name, 1 Tim. ii. 1. with 5, 6.

6. That He died for ſuch as do deny him, and crucify him to themſelves afreſh, and finally periſh. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. chap. x. 29. 2 Pet. ii 1. See alſo Rom. xiv. 15. 1 Cor. viii. 11.

Theſe *All* are thoſe *Many* in St. Matthew; unleſs you will ſay, He gave his life a ranſom for *many*, becauſe they are not *all*, but a *many* that will accept of it; and conſequently that in the event, they are not *All*, but a *Many* that are actually redeemed, the reſt loſing the benefit of the general ranſom through their willful infidelity, and neglect to make application of it.

But for the ſpiritual peace and comfort of poor ſouls, Mr. *Baxter* hath found it very neceſſary to tell them this great Truth‡, "That the Scripture,
" by the plainneſs and fulneſs of its expreſſions,
" makes it as clear as the light, that CHRIST died
" *for all*. And, (ſaith he) If S[illegible]n would per-
" ſwade you, either that no ranſom or ſacrifice

(*f*) 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. chap. iv. 10. (*g*) Heb. ii. 9.
(*h*) Joh. iii. 16. chap. i. 29. chap. vi. 33. 51. (*i*) 1 Joh. ii. 2. (*k*) 1 Pet. iii. 18. (*l*) ibid. ver. 20.

* See The Examination of Tilenus, pag. 168, 169, 170.

‡ Direct. for Peace of Conſc. Dir. 5. pag. 32, 33.

"was ever given for you, or that therefore you
"have no Redeemer to truſt in, and no Saviour
"to believe in, and no Sanctuary to fly to from
"the wrath of God; he muſt firſt prove you,
"either to be no loſt ſinner, or to be a final im-
"penitent unbeliver, that is, that you are dead
"already; or elſe he muſt delude your under-
"ſtanding, to make you think that Chriſt died
"not for *All*: And then I confeſs, (ſaith he)
"he hath a ſore advantage againſt your faith and
"Comfort.

Deso. I have but one ſcruple more that diſturbs me, and it is this; Whether (as it is abundantly evinced that Chriſt died for all, ſo) He doth make interceſſion for Grace for all; For if this part of his Prieſtly Office be limited and reſtrained to ſome certain number, His death for the reſt (without his interceſſion for Grace to apply the fruits thereof) will be of no advantage nay, a great diſadvantage* to them.

Samar. You ſay very true; therefore we do not ſeparate his death from his interceſſion. Which Interceſſion he makes unto his Father, that he would pleaſe, in a way and meaſure, moſt ſuitable to his own wiſdom, aſſociated with Mercy and Juſtice, to communicate Grace neceſſary and ſufficient for the needs of all men. If he made interceſſion* for ſo great tranſgreſſors as were his bloody murderers, (in whoſe behalf he ſaid even in the heat of his ſufferings, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*) Who can doubt of an intereſt in his interceſſion? Beſides, his interceſſion is grounded upon his propitiation, and that is for the whole world; which is St. John's great cordial for our infirmities, 1 Joh. ii. 1, 2.

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* Contrary to what himſelf ſaith of his Exhibition, Joh. iii. 17. Baxt. *ibid. at* 29. *Certainly*: *& quod preced. et ſeq.*

Deso. But I have heard one text alledged which hath much dejected me in my hour of temptation; it is St. John. xvii. 9, where our Saviour is making his moſt ſolemn and pathetical prayer, that we find recorded amongſt all the evangeliſts; and ſome ſay, It is as it were a copy of his interceſſion now in heaven; yet there he ſaith, *I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine.*

Samar. This Text, I confeſs, kept me long in ſuſpence about this article; but upon better adviſement I obſerve ſeveral and diſtinct parts of that prayer of our Saviour: Which obſervation unlocked the ſecret, or the doubt rather, and gave me a clear notice of the ſenſe of the whole prayer: The firſt and greateſt part whereof is ſpent in the behalf of his apoſtles, for whom he prays, That his Father would preſerve them in truth and unity, ver. 11, 17. That he would give them patience and courage to endure the malice of the world, and ſupport their ſpirits under the perſecutions of it, ver. 14, 15. That he would bleſs their miniſtry, and make it ſucceſsful to the converſion of the world, ver. 18, 19, 20. This part of the prayer being eſpecially deſigned for the apoſtles, an interceſſion for the proſperity of their office, and the perſeverance of their perſons in the faith. In this part of his prayer he inſerted theſe words very fitly, (*I pray for them, I pray not for the world.*) But having diſcharged this part, he then prays more extenſively, even for all that ſhould believe through their miniſtry, Ver. 20. And becauſe an unity in faith, and charity, in doctrine and affection is ſo amiable, that it is a great motive to induce ſtrangers to embrace that religion, that is calculated to preſerve ſuch unity among the profeſſors of it: Therefore he prays for this unity amongſt believers, that it may gain credit to the goſpel they profeſs, and procure the miniſtry thereof to be the more effectual to the unbelieving world†. The whole prayer (as to theſe branches) runs thus, *Neither pray I for theſe* (apoſtles) *alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us.* N.B. *That the world* (of unbelievers) *may believe that thou haſt ſent me.*

Here you ſee clearly our Saviour prays, that the grace of Faith may mediately (through the miniſtry of the word, and the Chriſtian-like converſation of believers) be beſtowed upon the whole world. And foraſmuch as our bleſſed Lord doth here intimate, that unity amongſt Chriſtians would be a mean highly conducible thereunto, therefore conſider how much all that profeſs his great and glorious name are obliged to lay down all animoſities begotten betwixt pride, covetouſneſs, and faction, and to endeavour earneſtly to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace*.

Deso. My dear friend, I do now moſt heartily thank you, and my gracious God for you. "Bleſſed (*a*), and for ever bleſſed be the God and "Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according "to his abundant mercy hath begotten me again unto a lively hope, through the univerſal (*b*) Redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus; whereby I am now reſtored to my peace and comfort, and enabled to rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory (*c*).

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† Verſ. 21, 23. 25. * Epheſ. iv. 3. (*a*) 1 Pet. i. 3.

SAMAR. And "Bleſſed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourſelves are comforted of God(*d*)." This is our duty upon our emergency out of any other ſadneſs, as well as out of grievous lapſes, by virtue of that obligation laid on St. Peter, "*And thou, when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren*(*e*)."

I ſhall add no more but this exhortation:—— "See that you walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, and as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the price of your high calling (*f*): Building up yourſelf on your moſt holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt, keep yourſelf in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, unto eternal life (*g*): And be not weary in well-doing, for in due ſeaſon you ſhall reap, if you faint not(*h*). Therefore my beloved *Deſolatus*, be you ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord(*i*)."

"And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole ſpirit, and

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(*b*) Rom. iii. 23, 24. (*c*) 1 Pet. i. 8. (*d*) 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. (*e*) Luke xxii. 32. (*f*) Col. i. 10. Phil. i. 27. Epheſ. iv. 1. Phil. iii. 14. (*g*) Jude's epiſt. verſ. 20, 21. (*h*) Gal. vi. 9. (*i*) 1 Cor. xv. and ver. the laſt.

“ and ſoul, and body, be preſerved blameleſs
“ unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.
“ Faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo will
“ do it (*l*).”

“ Now unto him that is able to keep you from
“ falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before
“ the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy,
“ to the only wiſe God our Saviour, be glory and
“ majeſty, dominion and power, both now and
“ ever, Amen(*m*).”

St. Luke, x. 30—34.

A Certain man fell among thieves, which wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. &c.

But a certain Samaritan had compaſſion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine. &c.

1 Tim iv. 8.

Godlineſs is profitable unto all things.

2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

Therefore ſeeing we have this Miniſtry, as we have received mercy we faint not ; But have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.

24 OC 62

PROSPER,

(*l*) 1 Theſſ. v. 23, 24. (*m*) Jude's epiſt. ver. 2 25. 4.

PROSPER, to the viith Objection of *Vincent*,
where he ſays, that " The Will of God ſo
" determines, that the greater part of Chriſtians
" neither will nor can be ſaved," thus replies:

" If this is ſpoken of thoſe, who forſaking all
" Chriſtian converſation, and the paths of piety,
" irrecoverably ſlide into the moſt damnable
" errors, till they deliberately commit the moſt
" abominable actions; there can be no doubt that
" theſe having ſo depraved a will, do abſolutely
" refuſe to be ſaved; and ſo long as they *will*
" not, they *cannot* be ſaved. But it is by no
" means to be inferred that any have ever fallen
" into ſo deplorable a ſtate by the Will or Plea-
" ſure of God: Who is rather inclined to raiſe
" up them that fall, and who delighteth to build
" up the broken down. For no man is reſtored
" unleſs it is his Pleaſure, no man is eſtabliſhed
" but by his Grace. The Will of God therefore
" is, that his creatures may continue in his favour;
" who, untill he is firſt forſaken, forſaketh none;
" and who is frequently condeſcending to make
" overtures for the re-converſion of *Backſliders*.

" Moſt certainly we have never known any of
" the faithful (who departed not from their alle-
" giance to him) forſaken of God; neither can
" the perdition of any proceed from a partial
" appointment in the divine ſyſtem. But for the

“ *many* therefore, who do now judge and act
“ from the arbitration of *Reaſon,* and who might
“ fall away, ſo as not to have been cut off, is the
“ *free reward* to be diſtributed, according to
“ their works: And an acceptable determination
“ could not be wrought in their will, but through
“ the co-operation (or energy) of the Spirit of
“ God. For the natural will of man worketh
“ *alone* in evil actions; but in thoſe which are
“ *good* it cannot be *alone.*”

24 OC 62

FINIS.

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